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THE NONSUCH PROFESSOR IN HIS MERIDIAN SPLENDOUR.

75 cents.

Sam'l. Miller.

THE

NONSUCH PROFESSOR

IN HIS MERIDIAN SPLENDOUR;

OR, THE SINGULAR

ACTIONS OF SANCTIFIED CHRISTIANS.

LAID OPEN

In Seven Sermons,

AT ALL-HALLOW'S CHURCH, LONDON-WALL.

BY WILLIAM SECKER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE WEDDING-RING, A SERMON,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A New Edition,

REVISED BY THE REVEREND MATTHEW WILKS:

AND RECOMMENDED BY THE

REV. J. COCKIN, AND THE REV. E. PARSONS.

Hear, for I will speak of excellent Things.——PROV. viii. 6.
Wherefore, by their Fruits ye shall know them.——MATT. vii. 20.

LONDON:

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1829.

THE

EPISTLE DEDICATORY,

To Sir Edward Barkham, Knight and Baronet, and his religious Lady, Frances Barkham,
OF TOTTENHAM.

HONOURED WORTHIES,

You have tied me in so many silken cords of kindness, that I must live and die in these pleasant bonds. The only return I can make you is by pen and ink, to acknowledge myself your debtor; persuaded that your noble minds are like that of Artaxerxes, as condescending to receive small things from others, as to grant great things himself.

I am sensible what prejudices are conceived against recommendatory epistles. I presume I shall not kindle strange fire upon your altar, by informing you, that I believe you take more pleasure in godliness than in greatness. You have learned, that piety is the best parentage; and that to be *new born* is better than to be *high born.*

It is reported, that "in some great personages' houses, there are more oaths heard in one day, than prayers in one year:" but in your house, there are more prayers heard in one day, than oaths in one year. God has ornamented your terrestrial crowns with many choice jewels. He has given you of the fatness of the earth, as well as of the dew of heaven: Esau's venison, as well as Jacob's blessing: the nether springs of common bounty, as well as the upper springs of special mercy. There are four showers which have watered your garden: —a fruitful posterity, an inward tranquillity, a faithful society, and a grateful memory. Ah, how liberal has God's hand been towards you: and how lively should your hearts be towards him! You have a large room in many godly bosoms; but, alas, the best man's confidence on earth is insufficient to carry you to heaven. A crack in the greatest pebble is not equal to a flaw in the smallest diamond.

I here present you with a piece, which is more practical than notional; more fit for a *Christian* to *live* upon, than for a *critic* to *look* upon. I hope the dregs do not lie so thick in it as to prevent your drawing clear wine from it.

I have attempted from this scripture to draw a believer's picture, and hope you will view it with

an attentive eye. May you remember, that by how much you are made greater than others, by so much better you should be than others! On earth it is your chief business to seek God, and in heaven it will be your chief blessedness to see God. While some look with envy on the rich man's estate, may you look with trembling on the rich man's accounts!

You know you should not only be *pictures* of piety, but also *patterns* of piety: then, while you are descending the hill of nature, you will also be ascending the hill of grace; you will prove yourselves such jewels of mercy, as shall be locked up in the cabinet of glory.—Now that your happiness may exceed your hope, that your little family below may compose a part of the family above, that it may live holily with you on earth, and eternally with God in heaven, is the earnest prayer of,

Most worthy Patrons,

Your humble Servant,

WILLIAM SECKER.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

To serve man's necessity, is charitable; to serve his conveniency, is warrantable; to serve his iniquity, is blameable; but to serve his purity, is honourable.

The design of this piece is not the ostentation of the *author,* but the edification of the *reader.* In this subject you have a breviary of religion: the works enjoined in it are weighty, and the blessings annexed to it are many. Christianity is here dressed in the white linen of purity. As grace begins in God's love to us, so it ends in our love to him. It both makes our comforts greater, and our crowns brighter. Those children who are found moving in the orbits of obedience, shall enjoy the clearest sunshine of their father's countenance.

Beloved, be sure to raise your superstructure upon an immoveable foundation; and enter into such a business, as hath an immediate tendency to blessedness. It is an unparalleled mercy, to be preserved from corruption in the midst of general infection. It is far better to be innocent, than penitent; to prevent the malady, than invent the remedy.

Remember, Reader, that we can call no time our own, but the present. How carefully should

we shoot, who have but one arrow to direct at the mark! The more you enjoy the smiles of God, the more you will shine in the eyes of those saints, who judge of the trees of righteousness by the fruits of righteousness. The enjoyment of the world is neither an evidence of the divine favour or anger. Judge not yourself, therefore, by the gold in your bags, but by the grace of God in your heart; not by your wealth, but by your works. If religion be your vineyard to labour in, eternity shall be your bed to rest upon. Every grace that is here exercised, shall there be glorified.

It is an unseemly thing to put on the fair suit of profession, to do the foul work of corruption. The time is approaching, when God will burn up those vines which bear only sour grapes. The gospel not only requires diligence, but it also requires excellence; that by the singularity of your actions, you may prove the sincerity of your disposition.

Christian, the race is short in which you run; but the prize is great for which you run. I wish this gale of divinity may speed your vessel to the haven of felicity: and when God gives in more to me, I shall give out more to you. In the mean time, I shall deem it my highest honour to be instrumental to others' conversion; and in this relation I beg to subscribe myself,

Christian Reader,

Your's in the Lord,

WILLIAM SECKER.

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

Courteous Reader,

The work in your hand speaks so powerfully for itself, that it requires no advocate to plead its cause. Its author, the Rev. W. Secker, seems to have been a person of a peculiar genius and original talents. He lived in the last century, was minister of All-Hallows Church, London-wall, where he delivered the substance of this publication in seven Sermons.

The editor has taken the liberty to expunge some parts, to supply others, and so to dispose of the order of the whole work, as he has judged most conducive to good: and though it be now far from the highest literary polish, yet he flatters himself that it will be found a real jewel in the memory, a reviving cordial to the mind, and a choice directory to the steps of every Christian reader. With this hope, he humbly recommends it to you, and you to that great God, who only can bless, and who alone is worthy to be blessed.

MATTHEW WILKS.

TO THE REV. G. WILSON.

Sir,

THE "Nonsuch Professor," which you propose to reprint, is certainly a book of great worth. I have read it formerly with peculiar pleasure and profit. The style of this book is very perspicuous; and if the time in which it was written is taken into consideration, it is eminently good. But its chief excellency is the admirable strain of holiness which runs through the whole, and the singular arguments with which it is enforced. I am happy to find that it is going forth again into the world in a new edition. To bring forward such works of former and better days as are likely to stop the progress of infidelity and licentiousness is performing an important service to the cause of religion. If my name can be of any use in the recommendation of this good work, it is at your service.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

J. COCKIN.

TO THE REV. G. WILSON.

Dear Sir,

THERE are but few books, of the kind, which deserve to be held in greater esteem than SECKER's

"Nonsuch Professor." Although it is now many years since I first read it, I have not forgotten the satisfaction and pleasure it afforded me; and I have often wished to see it more extensively circulated among the class of readers for whose religious instruction it appears peculiarly calculated. To the Christian who can devote but little time to mental improvement, and whose pecuniary circumstances render him inadequate to the purchase of larger works, the re-publication of SECKER must be highly acceptable. A book so rich in sentiment, and written in a style so likely to engage and fix attention, cannot fail to enlighten and animate the devout mind. If applied to the various subjects of self-examination, and if the solemn truths it investigates, as essential to experimental religion, are pressed home upon the conscience, it will be "like a mirror held close to the lips: if there be the least *breath of spiritual life*, it will *catch* it and *shew* it." I was therefore happy to be informed of your design to publish a *neat* and *cheap* edition of this valuable book; and I hope it will be honoured with a circulation answerable to its intrinsic merit, and far exceeding your own well-founded expectations. In aid of this undertaking, my name, and any little influence I possess, are at your command.

I am your's affectionately,

E. PARSONS.

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THE

NONSUCH PROFESSOR.

MATT. v. 47.

What do ye more than others?

IN a mountain the law was propounded to Moses, in a mountain the law was expounded by Jesus; the former to a man of God, the latter by the Son of God: the one to a prophet of the Lord, the other by the Lord of the prophets.

As the works of Christ were miraculous, so the words of Christ were mysterious; they were such a depth which none could sound, but those whom God had furnished with the plummet of an enlightened understanding. Before any one can peruse the scriptures to profit, the Lamb of God must open the seven seals.

In this chapter, the soul-justifying Saviour condemns the self-justifying *scribes* and *pharisees*. Never did men make more boast in the law, but never had men less cause. They knew but little as to the letter, but less of its spirit. They were better acquainted with the customs of nature, than the canons of scripture. Alas, how shall the blind see, when the *seers* are blind? They who should have put the eyes of others in, had put their own out.

The righteous laws of God cannot connive at the unrighteous lives of men; they not only require truth without, but within also. The rays of this sun enter the most secret chambers of the heart: therefore he that lusteth after, and he that lieth with a woman, are both adulterers. He is a murderer whose heart is full of hatred, though his hands be free from violence. Thus the lusts of men may be predominant, when the lives of men are not inordinate; as guests may be in the house, when they look not out of the windows. He who begins religion where it should end, will end religion where it should be begun.

But as the suburbs direct to the city, and the portal leads to the palace, so the context will guide us to the text.

'If ye love them that love you, what reward have you? do not the publicans the same?'

As an echo returns the voice it receives, so many will shew kindness where kindness is shewn: but shall publicans be as godly as the Lord's disciples? Shall the sons of men equalize the sons of God? Shall the law of nature swell to so high a tide as the law of grace? This were for the dribbling rivulet to vie with the drowning ocean; this were for royalty to degenerate into beggary; and for the meridian sun to yield no more light than midnight shades.

'If you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?'

I shall not curiously dissect these words, lest I should present to your view a frightful skeleton; nor shall I lavishly paint these windows, lest my

deep colours should shut out the light. The native comeliness of scripture scorns the unnatural colour of a bewitching Jezebel. One rough diamond is of more value than many smooth counterfeits.

My subject treats not of oratory, but divinity; and my design in it is rather to express affections, than to affect expressions. Though the sweetness of the sauce may yield pleasure to the palate, yet it is only the soundness of the meat that can administer nourishment to the blood.

This text is like a precious jewel, small in quantity, but great in quality. The words contain two parts:

I. An action propounded.

II. A question proposed.

1. An action propounded, touching that which is lawful: because salutation is only a pledge of affection, it is the overflowing of the heart at the lips. There is a kiss of subjection and obedience, that is the subject's kiss; there is a kiss of wantonness and temptation, that is the harlot's kiss; there is a kiss of dissimulation, that is the traitor's kiss; there is also a kiss of tenderness and affection, and that is the brother's kiss.

Now this scripture enjoins you not only to salute your friends, but your enemies also. Party esteem is but withered fruit, and falls rather from Sodom's than Sion's trees. There is therefore a kiss of pity and forgiveness, and that is the Christian's kiss: if this be wanting, the others are vain. For, *if ye salute your brethren only,* then observe what follows; which is,

2. A question proposed, 'What do ye more than others?'

Doctrine;—that singular Christians will perform singular actions.

This is the well from which I shall draw the water, and the foundation upon which I shall raise the superstructure. You cannot rationally imagine that you will be supplied with bitter streams from so sweet a spring, or that I should make a bowing wall or tottering fence with such choice materials. Those who collect pearls from this spot, will leave as many behind them as they carry with them.

As the disciples of Christ *are* more than others, so the disciples of Christ *do* more than others. A hypocrite may move beyond a sodomite; but a Christian moves beyond them both. Though the naturally dead can do nothing, yet the spiritually dead may do something. Though they can do nothing to merit the grace of life, yet they may do something as to using the means of life.

Cicero complains of Homer, "that he taught the *gods* to live like men:" but grace teaches men to live like *gods*. It is lamentable that we should live so long in the world, and do so little for God; or that we should live so short a time in the world, and do so much for Satan. Other creatures are not more below a sinner, than a saint is above a sinner. Man is the excellency of the creature, the saint is the excellency of man; grace is the excellency of the saint, and glory is the excellency of grace.

Believers are among others, as Saul was among the Israelites, the tallest by the head and shoulders. Their birth is truly low, who are not born from above. What are such earthly shrubs, compared with heavenly cedars; or such thorns of the world's

brake, to the willows of God's brook? Those trees which have their top branches of hope in heaven, will have their lower boughs of activity on earth. Those who look for a heaven made ready, will live as though they were already in heaven.

Grace not only makes a man more a man, but it also makes him more than a man. The primitive Christians were the best of men. None were more lowly in their dispositions, or more lovely in their conversation. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation. He was not a sinner among saints, but he was a saint among sinners. Who would have looked for so fair a bird in so foul a nest? Though he once acted as the sons of men do, yet he was numbered with the sons of God. A field of wheat may be good, and yet have a weed in it. A saint is not free *from* sin, that is his burden; a saint is not free *to* sin, that is his blessing. Sin is in him, that is his lamentation; his soul is not in sin, that is his consolation.

Mark how an immaculate Saviour glories in one of these singular saints: *And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job?* Why, what is there in him so considerable? *There is none like him in all the earth.* Though there were none in heaven so bad as Job, yet there were none on earth so good as Job. He was a man so like unto God, that there was no man like him.

A gracious person once hearing how far an hypocrite might go, said, 'Let hypocrites proceed as far as they can in that which is laudable; and when they can advance no further, I will go beyond them.' A true Christian not only does more

than others *will* do, but he also does more than others *can* do. Whatsoever is not above the top of nature, is below the bottom of grace. There are some who pretend to believe, but work not; there are others who work, but believe not: but a saint does both; he so obeys the law, as if there were no gospel to be believed; and so believes the gospel, as though there were no law to be obeyed. Religion consists not singly in believing, or doing, but in both.

There are four sorts of things in the world:

1. There are some things which are neither good nor pleasant; as *envy* and *detraction*. The eclipsing of another's sun will not make thine own shine with brighter beams. O pare off those envious nails, which are ever disfiguring that face which is fairer than thine own. Why do you wound yourself with that plaster, which is laid upon your brother's sore; or weep at every shower, which falls beside your own inclosure? Who would envy an ox that pasture, which only fits it for the slaughter; or the malefactor that carriage, which only conveys him to the place of execution? You have no less, because others have much; nor have they much, because you have little. Another's wealth is no more the cause of your want, than Leah's fruitfulness was the cause of Rachel's barrenness. O never pine at your neighbour's prosperity, and you shall never pine away through your own scarcity. He enjoys much who is thankful for a little. A grateful mind, is a great mind.

2. There are some things which are pleasant, but not good, as *youthful lusts* and *worldly de-*

lights. These bees carry honey in their mouths, but they have a sting in their tails. When this Jael brings forth her milk and her butter, then beware of the nail and the hammer. Death is in the pot while you are tasting the soup. The world always presents a deadly potion in the gilded cup of worldly pleasure. If the cup be sinful, do not taste it; if it be lawful, carouse not over it. Reason forbids you, either to taste known poison, or to be intoxicated with pleasant wine. The fish is caught upon the hook, by leaping at the bait. Sin is like a river, which begins in a quiet spring, but ends in a tumultuous sea.

3. There are some things good, but not pleasant, as *sorrow* and *affliction.* Sin is pleasant, but unprofitable; and sorrow is profitable, but unpleasant. By affliction, the Lord separates the sin that he hates, from the soul that he loves. He does not always ordain it, to take your spirit out of your flesh, but your flesh out of your spirit. It is not sent to take down the tabernacle of nature; but to rear up the temple of grace within you. As waters are purest when they are in motion, so saints are generally holiest when in affliction. A foul fescue frequently points to a fair lesson. Some Christians resemble those children, who will learn their books no longer than while the rod is on their backs. It is well known, that by the greatest affliction the Lord has sealed the sweetest instruction. Many are not bettered by the judgments they see, when they have by the judgments they have felt. The purest gold is the most pliable. That is the best blade, which bends well, without retaining its crooked figure.

4. There are some things both good and pleasant, and those are, *gracious operations on the soul.* A believer's bed of graces is more fragrant than the most precious bed of spices. He who freely gives his image to us, must of necessity love his image in us. How illustrious do the heavens appear, while the sun is radiating them with his beams! Now, my brethren, 'Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.'

But, as you cannot see so well by a candle under a bushel as upon a table, I shall therefore hold up the subject to your view in the following light:

First, I shall touch upon the explanation of that which is doctrinal.

Secondly, Upon the application of that which is practical.

The former is like cutting the garment out; the latter is like putting the garment on.

I am first to treat of that which is doctrinal. And here I shall shew, first, why a believer does more than others; and, secondly, what he does more than others.

I begin with the first. Why do Christians do more than others?

1. *Because more is done for them, than is done for others.*

There is that done for them, which none but he who made them could do. They are loved, they are atoned for, they are prayed for, and they are provided for, more than others. Now where there is a superaddition of privilege, there should be a superaddition of practice. We naturally expect

more splendour from the beaming of the sun, than from the burning of a candle; and we look for more moisture from the dissolving of a cloud, than from the dropping of a bucket. The same heat that melts the wax, will harden the clay. The juice which distils into a rose, is returned in a sweet perfume; but that which drops upon a nettle, is returned in an ill savour. If the mercies of God be not load-stones to draw us to heaven, they will be mill-stones to draw or sink us in perdition.

'To whom much is given, of them much shall be required.' The blessings we enjoy are not the fruit of our merit, but the fruit of God's mercy. By how much the more grace we have received, by so much the more glory we are obliged to return to the giver. He does not exact much, where little is bestowed; nor accept little, where much is received. A drop of praise is an unsuitable acknowledgement for an ocean of mercy. 'Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel—You only have I known of all the families of the earth.' But was their return according to the benefit? No, surely; otherwise he would not have added, 'Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' They were more known to God than others, therefore they should have acknowledged him more than others.

Those who have tasted the goodness of God, can never speak good enough of God. Reason teaches, that those should bless most, who are most blessed. What are carnal men to Christian men? The power of God appears in the *formation* of one; but the stupendous grace of God shines illustriously in

the *transformation* of the other. In creation, God has given the productions of the earth for our bodies: but in redemption he has given himself for our souls. Thus, it appears to be a greater favour to be converted than to be created; yea, it were better for us to have *no* being, than not to have a *new* being.

When you were sailing to destruction, before sin's dangerous blast, then the most blessed gales of mercy sprang up, and changed your course. When you lay in the blood of transgression, then God beheld you with bowels of compassion. His heart pitied you, and his hand helped you. Now, where there is distinguishing mercy, there ought to be distinguishing duty. The husbandman who holds the largest farms, will pay the greatest rent: and he who sows the most precious seed, will expect the choicest crop. Now read the great husbandman's complaint against his vineyard: *Now will I sing to my beloved, a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard: my well-beloved hath a vineyard on a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine; and built a tower in the midst, and also made a wine-press therein.* Here is an inventory of God's goodness to his vineyard. Now, what follows? *He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.* He looked that they should be better to him than others, because he had been better to them than he had been to others.

God had made them flowers of paradise, while others were left as the weeds of the wilderness.

While others were Satan's thoroughfare, they were God's choice inclosure.

How has God embraced you, who are believers, over many shoulders! He has made you his own dials, on which the beams of the sun of righteousness do shine! He has made you studs for his crown, while others are stools for his feet! *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?* As if he had said, *Lord, what are we more than others, that thou shouldest show thyself to us; when thou mightest have shewn thyself to them and not to us?*

Reader! has God made you a vessel to honour out of the same lump? Has he shewn himself to you, and not unto the world? And will you not shew yourself for God, and not for the world? Remember, that it lay as a great blotch on Hezekiah's escutcheon, *That he rendered not unto the Lord according to the benefit done unto him.*

2. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is, *Because they stand in a nearer relation to God than others.*

The nearer the relation, the stronger are the ties of obligation. In this view, believers on earth are superior to angels in heaven. Christ is related to them as a lord to his servants: but he is united to these as a head to its members. In this head there are no glazed eyes, nor are there any withered or dead members in this body. While others are made of God, these are born of God. While others stand before him as prisoners before their judge, these appear before him as children before a father, and as a bride before a bridegroom. There are no

still-born children in the family of grace. God is the living father, and therefore all his children live by him; he is also the everlasting Father, and therefore he will have due honour paid him. *For a son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?* As a father, he will be revered for his goodness: and as a master, he will be feared for his greatness.

If honour be not the Lord's due, let him not have it: if it be his due, let him not be denied it. As man was born to serve God, he had better never have been born, than to refuse him that service.

When the son of Fluvius was found in the conspiracy of Catiline, the displeased Father reprehended him sharply, saying, *Non ego te Catilinæ, genui sed patriæ.* 'I did not beget you for Catiline, but for your country.' This is the language of God to his children. *I gave you not bodies and souls to serve sin with, but to serve me with.* Our bodies were not formed to be the instruments of unrighteous actions, nor our souls the gloomy abodes of foul spirits.

The everlasting Father cannot brook the ungrateful behaviour of his own children. Therefore, attend to the great complaint he prefers against them: *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for my children refuse to hear; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!*—Where the relation is the nearest, there the provocation is the greatest. It is far more pleasing to behold rebels becoming children, than to behold children becoming rebels.

When Cæsar was wounded by the senators of Rome, Brutus, a Roman of an illustrious family, also made a pass at him. With that, Cæsar gave him a wishful look, saying, 'What thou, my son Brutus!' How can that tender mother endure to feel those lips sucking her blood, which were wont to draw her maternal breast? The unkindness of a friend is more sensibly felt than that of an enemy.

The Roman censors took such an utter dislike to the debauched son of Africanus, that they refused to let him wear a ring on which his father's likeness was engraven; alleging, 'that he who was so unlike the father's person, was unworthy to wear the father's picture.' Thus God will never grant any to enjoy the love of Christ in heaven, who are destitute of the likeness of Christ on earth.

Alexander, who is reported to have been an exceedingly swift runner, was once solicited to run in the olympic games. He answered, 'I will, if kings are mine antagonists.' Give me such a saint who will pursue nothing on earth, which may be unsuitable to his birth from heaven. What, shall he walk in *darkness*, whose father is *light?* Shall those lips be found broaching falsehood, which were found breathing out prayers? Shall those eyes be found gazing on unseemly objects, which were found reading the lively oracles of God?

The remembrance of our dignity should engage us to our heavenly duty. *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine and strong drink.* Such a sin is detestable in a sovereign, who has the eyes of his subjects upon him; but it is ag-

gravated in a saint, who has the eyes of his Saviour upon him. A *spot* in scarlet, is worse than a *stain* in russet.

3. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is, *Because they profess more than others.*

Though there be many professors who are not true believers; yet there are no true believers but what are professors. As trees are known by their fruits, so believers are known by their works. Such as have received Christ's bounty, are unwilling to fight under Satan's banner.

There are many who profess to know God, but in works deny him; being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. Man is not what he says, but what he does. For a man to say what he does, and not to do what he says, is to resemble those trees which are full of leaves but void of fruits—those barns, wherein there is much chaff, but no grain. *What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.*

Ah, how intolerable will the punishment of those professors be, who have appeared as burnished gold to men, and are found only base metal in the sight of God! What will it profit, to put off the old manners, and not put off the old man? A snake may change its skin, and yet preserve its sting. The gospel professed, may lift a man *unto* heaven; but it is only the gospel possessed, that brings a man *into* heaven. To profess piety, and yet to practise impiety, will be so far from advancing a man's commendation, that it will assuredly heighten his condemnation.

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the

things that I say? As if he had said, *Either keep my words more, or else call me Lord no more; either take me into your lives, or cast me out of your lips.*—As princes disdain to have their images on base counterfeits, so the Lord Jesus cannot delight to see his name on rotten hypocrites. Therefore he saith, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity.* If godliness be evil, why is it so much professed? if it be good, why is it so little practised?

Who hath saved, and called us with an holy calling. Now a holy calling will be attended with a holy carriage. Many may be found who can talk of grace, but very few can be found who taste of grace. It is not every one who *looks* like a Christian, that *lives* like a Christian. For there are some who make their boast of the law; and yet through breaking of the law they dishonour God. It is a greater glory to us that we are allowed to serve God, than it is to him that we offer him that service. He is not rendered happy by us; but we are made happy by him. He can do without such earthly servants; but we cannot do without such a heavenly master.

It is unnatural for a Christian's tongue to be larger than his hand. It is lamentable for him to hold a lamp to others, and yet to walk in darkness himself. There are generally more infected by the undue conduct of some, than there are instructed by the righteous doctrines of others. He that gives proper precepts, and then sets improper examples, resembles that foolish person who labours hard to kindle a fire, and when he has done it,

throws cold water upon it to quench it. Though such a physician may administer the reviving cordial to some fainting disciple, yet he is in danger himself of dying in a swoon. I may say of such professors as was once said of a certain preacher, 'That when he was in the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever leave it, he was so excellent an instructor; but when he was out of it, it was a pity he should ever ascend it again, he was so wretched a liver.'

Many people are offended with the profession of religion, because all are not religious who make a profession. A little consideration will correct this error. Does the sheep despise its fleece, because the wolf has worn it? Who blames a crystal river, because some melancholy men have drowned themselves in its streams? The best drugs have their adultrates. And will you refuse opiate, because some have wantonly poisoned themselves with it? Though you have been cozened with false colours, yet you should not disesteem that which is dyed in grain. He is a bad economist who, having a spot in his garment, cuts off the cloth, instead of rubbing off the dirt. God rejects all religion, but his own.

4. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is, *Because they are inwardly conformed to the image of their Redeemer more than others.*

As Jesus Christ is the fountain of all excellency, to which all must come; so he is the pattern of excellency, to which all must conform. As he is the root on which a saint grows; so he is the rule by which a saint walks. God has made *one* Son

in the image of us all, that he might make all his sons in the image of that one. Jesus Christ lived to teach us how to live, and died to teach us how to die. Therefore he commands us, saying, *Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* O reader! if the life of Christ be not your pattern, the death of Christ will never be your pardon! Though the Lord Jesus was a man of many sorrows, yet he was not a man of the least sin. No man can *equalize* him in holiness; yet every man ought to *imitate* him in holiness.

As the sun is the glory of creation, so is Christ the glory of redemption. The summit of moral religion consists in imitating God: without this, your religion will be found a *Tekel:* when it is weighed in the balance, it will be wanting. It would be well if there were as great a similarity between the life of Christ and the life of Christians, as there is between a just copy and the original. What he was by nature, that we should be by grace. As face answereth to face in water, so should life answer to life in scripture. He that was a way to others, never went out of the way himself.

A truly religious life, is a crystal glass; wherein Christ sees his own likeness. In our sacramental participations, we shew forth the death of Christ; but in our evangelical conversation, we shew forth the life of Christ. An excellent Christ calls for excellent Christians. As he was never unemployed, so he was never ill-employed. For, *he went about doing good.* As our happiness lay

near his heart, so his honour should lie near our hearts.

Jesus Christ even submits his person to be judged by his actions. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* As if he had said, *Never take me for a Saviour, if I act contrary to a Saviour.* Thus should it be with a professor: *Never take me for a Christian, if I live contrary to the life of a Christian.* If professors do more than others, it might be said, 'Those are men and professors; but not men and Christians.'

Man is naturally an aspiring being, and loves to be nearest to those who are highest. Why does he not therefore take as much delight in those precepts which enjoin holiness, as in those promises which ensure happiness?

All those who are conformed to the image of the Redeemer, are as willing to be ruled by Christ, as they are to be esteemed by him. He that deems his yoke heavy, will not find his crown easy.

By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: *To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* Was it so then? and should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old, as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation?

How blessed would it be *for* us, to have that blessed scripture fulfilled *in* us, *As he was, so are we in this world.* Now if we are in this world as he was, we shall be in heaven as he is. If there be no likeness between Christ and you on earth,

there can be no friendship between Christ and you in heaven.

5. Another reason why Christians should do more than others, is, *Because they are looked upon more than others.*

If once a man commence a professor, the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his profession *in* the world is a separation *from* the world. Believers condemn those by their lives, who condemn them by their lips. Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched, the more he prayed. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.* It may be rendered, *because of mine observers.*

Christian! if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness, the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame; but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your weakness as a plea for their wickedness.

Men are merciless in their censures of Christians; they have no sympathy for their infirmity: while God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.* While the saint is a *dove* in the eyes of God, he is only a *raven* in the estimation of sinners.

Consider, Christian, that an unholy conversation strips off the rich ornamental jewels from the neck of the bride, the Lamb's wife. Sin indulged in a believer, is like a rent in a richly-embroidered garment; or like a crack in a silver bell. A foul spot is soonest discerned in the fairest cloth. The

world will sooner make an excuse for its own enormities, than for your infirmities.

The behaviour of some professors has often given the wicked an opportunity to reproach religion.—Lactantius reports, that the heathens were wont to say, 'The master could not be good, when his disciples were so bad.' The malice of sinners is such, that they will reproach the rectitude of the law, for the obliquity of their lives who swerve from it. O that your pure life did but hang a padlock upon their impure lips! Such will ever be throwing the dirt of professors upon the face of profession.

If the sun be eclipsed one day, it attracts more spectators than if it shone a whole year. So if you commit one sin, it will cause you many sorrows, and the world many triumphs. Dr. Whitaker, on reading the fifth of Matthew, brake out saying, *Aut hoc non est evangelium, aut nos non sumus evangelici*, 'Either this is not the gospel, or we are not of the gospel.' The cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians made them refuse Christian baptism; 'For,' said they, 'he must be a wicked God, who has such wicked servants.' O that God's jewels did but sparkle more in this benighted world!

That was a glorious encomium given to Zacharias and Elizabeth: *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* God *made* them both righteous, and then men *saw* them righteous. Their religion was undefiled before God and the Father; and their lives unspotted from the world.

Reader, would you be righteous in God's sight?

then you must be righteous in God's Son. Would you be unspotted from the world? then remember, you are not of the world. When the godly are left to fall, then the envious sinner will exclaim, 'There is your religion!' No wonder if a barbarian gives the alarm, when the leprosy is in an Israelitish house.

6. Another reason why believers should do more than others, is, *Because if they do no more, it will appear that they are no more than others.*

As there is no man so vicious, but some relative good may be performed by him to man; so there is no one so religious, but some evil may be committed by him against God. As one swallow does not prove the approach of summer, neither does one good action prove a man a believer. There is in every being a natural tendency to some centre. God is the centre of the saints, and glory is the centre of grace. Now where we do not discover that bias, we may deny the being.

Reader, would you be thought more than publicans and sinners? then beware of living as publicans and sinners. Jesus Christ gives you an excellent mirror in his memorable sermon upon the mount, for you to behold your own likeness in: *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* There is no ascertaining the quality of a tree, but by its fruits. When the wheels of a clock move within, the hand on the dial will move without. When the heart of a man is sound in conversion, then the life will be fair in profession. When the conduit is walled in, how shall we judge of the spring, but by the waters which run through the pipes?

As a sinner will discover the good he wants; so a saint will shew the good he enjoys. When the sun dawns upon the earth, it is presently known; and when the Sun of righteousness arises upon the heart, it cannot be hid. It is said of the Saviour, that *he could not be hid.* As it is with the head, so it is with the members. *Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine among men, that they may see your good works.*

When Saul was made a sovereign, he had another spirit poured out upon him; a spirit of government, for a place of government: and when a sinner is made a saint, *he* has also another spirit poured out upon *him.* As he is what he was not, so he does what he did not.

It is reported of an harlot, that when she saw a certain person with whom she had committed folly, she renewed her enticements; to whom he replied, 'I am not now what I once was.' Though she was the same woman that she was before; yet he was not the same man he was before.

Were the sun to give no more light than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of elementary heat. Were God to do no more than a creature, where would his Godhead be? Were a man to do no more than a brute, where would his manhood be? Were not a saint to excel a sinner, where would his sanctity be?

Professor, if you live and walk as a worldling, you subject yourself to that apostolic rebuke, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* If men debase

themselves as beasts, the Lord will nominate them beasts; and if Christians walk as men, God will call them men. There is no passing for current coin in heaven, without the stamp and signature of heaven.

7. The disciples of Christ do more than others, *Because they are appointed to be judges of others.*

If you consult the holy scriptures, you will find that both the Father, the Son, and the saints are to judge the world. The ordination is the Father's, the execution is the Son's, and the approbation is the saints'. This shall no more derogate from the honour of Christ, than the sessions of the *justices* derogates from the authority of the *judges.*

When the apostle Paul would quash the sinful suits among the believing Corinthians, he informed them that they did not so much require men of eminence to terminate their controversy, as men of godliness. *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? If you are to judge in causes between God and man, how much more in controversies between man and man?* If about matters that are eternal, why not in affairs that are temporal?

Felons may be jovial in the prison, and bold at the bar; but they will tremble at the tree. When wicked men come like miserable captives out of their holes, the godly shall rise like an unclouded sun above the horizon of the grave.

There is a cloud of witnesses to prove the Christian's judicial process:—Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, *Behold the*

Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgement upon all. Again he saith, *When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Now* the world judges the godly, but *then* the godly shall judge the world. The act of the head is imputed to the members, and the act of the members is acknowledged by the head.

Reader, in the great day there will be no distinction made between him who *now* sitteth on the bench, and him who standeth at the bar. Tell me, how will you be capable of passing a righteous sentence on others, for those evils which you have lived in the constant commission of? The true Christian can cordially subscribe to that ancient maxim, 'Because I enjoy the greatest share of religious majesty, I am therefore intitled to the least share of licentious liberty.' It was once said to Cæsar, 'Seeing all things are lawful to Cæsar, therefore it is the less lawful for Cæsar to do them.'

By faith, Noah, being warned of God, prepared an ark,—by which he condemned the world. Noah's believing set him to prosecute his building. Thus the sanctified Christian judges the world both by his faith and his practice.

Christian reader, remember, that the gospel purity of your life shows to worldlings the impurity of their's. The usual prejudice which the world has against religion, is, that it makes no man better, though it may make some men stricter.

We too frequently behold that those who exclaim against the pride of others, are as proud as

others. As they so constantly meet together, they are expected to be more godly; but they are not more godly for their meeting together. Take away their profession, and you take away their religion. They have nothing belonging to the sheep, but its skin.

Mark, how the God of Israel expostulates with the professing Israel of God: *Hath a nation changed their Gods? which are yet no gods; but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* Here is a professing people out-done by a people who made no profession. If heathens *take* up their gods, they will zealously *keep* up their gods. They were true to the false gods, while Israel was false to the true God.

Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! Why, what is the matter? *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* God does not call in a jury of angels to condemn them; but he empannels a jury of oxen and asses to pass sentence upon them. Alas, that oxen and asses should be more religious than men who professed religion! In their kind they are more kind. If their owners feed them, they readily own their owners.

8. And, lastly, the disciples of Christ do more than others, *Because they expect more than others.*

A true hope of heaven excites an utter dislike to the earth. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure.* Hope is too pure a plant to flourish or grow in an impure soil.

Reader, you must not look to toil for the prince

of *darkness* all the long day of your life; and then sup with the Prince of *light* at the evening of death. There is no going from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom. It is not the tyrannic reign of sin in your mortal body, which makes way for the triumphant reign of your soul in eternal glory. Grace is such a pilot, as, without its steerage, you will certainly suffer shipwreck in your voyage to everlasting tranquillity.

There is no gaining admittance into the King of heaven's privy chamber of felicity, without passing through the strait gate of purity. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* A dusty glass will not distinctly represent the face. To look for a Turkish paradise, is to conceive of the heaven of purity, as a house of impurity; but while they expect to bathe themselves in carnal pleasures, you should look to be the chaste and happy consort of the Lamb.

The Lord's gratuitous bestowments on saints awaken the grateful sentiments of saints. *Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* —Men commonly season the vessel with water, before they trust it with costly wine. Thus God will season the vessel of your heart with his grace, before he pours into it the wine of his glory. It is hard to say, whether God discovers more love in preparing heavenly mansions for the soul, than in preparing the soul for heavenly mansions.

Reader, if the Lord has made you a true believer, you earnestly desire that your present deportment may be suitable to your future preferment.

You know there is no living a vicious life, and dying a righteous death. As divine justice crushes none on earth before they are corrupted, so divine mercy crowns none in heaven before they are converted.

Holiness and happiness are so wisely joined together, that God will never suffer them to be put asunder: *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Though holiness be that which a sinner scorns; yet it is that which a Saviour crowns.

The soul of man is the Lord's casket, and grace the jewel: now, wherever the jewel is not found, the casket will be thrown away. Though the wheat be for a garner; yet the chaff is for the fire. The scripture presents you not only with an account of what God will do for a Christian; but also what a Christian will do for God.

The high prize of heavenly bliss is at the end of the gospel race: *So run that you may obtain.* To neglect the race of holiness, is to reject the prize of happiness. He that made you without your assistance, will not crown you till he has saved you from your disobedience.

It would be well for fruitless sinners, were they seriously to consider that fearful scripture: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* If you be not fruit-bearing plants, you must be burning brands. There is no making out your salvation, where there is no working out your salvation. Men are condemned, not only for their profaneness, but also for their slothfulness. Men may perish for being unpro-

fitable servants, as well as for being abominable servants.

The Lord binds none in the bundle of life, but such as are heirs of life. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* How cheerfully should those cast in their net, who are sure to inclose so excellent a draught of fishes!

Reader, why do you expect more than others in heaven, if grace has not made you more than others on earth? *If you love them that love you, what reward have you?* It is but natural that love should be returned to those from whom it has been received. Now natural works shall have only natural wages. If you would not have God put you off with a Pharisee's portion, how can you put him off with a Pharisee's performance?

The Lord hangs the bait of duty upon the hook of mercy. He sets the promises of the gospel in the galleries of his ordinances. The hardy soldier will undergo a bloody seed time, to enjoy a happy harvest. He has nothing more than earthly mammon in his pursuit; but the saint has nothing less than heavenly mansions in his pursuit.

Thus have I dispatched the first general head; namely, *Why the disciples of Christ do more than others.* I therefore come secondly to consider, *What* the disciples of Christ do more than others. —And here I shall form a golden chain of twenty links, for believers to wear about their necks.

The *first* singular action of sanctified Christians, is, *To do much good, and make but little noise.*

Some people say much, and do nothing; but Christians do much, and say nothing. To deserve praise where none is obtained, is better than to obtain it where none is deserved. The old maxim is worthy to be revived; he that desires honour, is not worthy of honour.

Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of men; otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. A saint may be seen doing more works than any; and yet he does not desire to do any of the works, to be seen. An alms which is seen, is by no means unpleasant to God, provided it be not given with a design to have it seen. Though good ends make not bad actions lawful; yet bad ends make good actions sinful.—The harp sounds sweetly; yet it hears not its own melody. Moses had more glory by his *veil* than he had by his *face*. It is truly pleasant to behold those living *in* the dust of humility, who have raised others *from* the dust by their liberality.

That ancient caution of our Saviour is very suitable to modern times: *Therefore, when thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the street, that they may have glory from men.* What the first verse calls *doing* to be *seen* of men, this calls *doing* to *receive glory* from men.

Hypocrites would never be anxious for men to see them; but that by seeing them, men should praise them. The indigent are more indebted to their *vanity* than their *charity*. They give alms, not so much for the poor to *live* upon, as for the

rich to *look* upon. This is employing the master's coin for the servants' gain. Hypocrites are more zealous for the *market*, than for the *closet*. They can pray better in the corners of the streets, than in the corners of their houses.

It is both meat and drink to a formalist to fast, if others do but see it. It is reported, that the nightingale never sings so sweetly, as when others stand by to hear its melody. *Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts;* when there was no zeal for the Lord of hosts to be seen. Jehu only made religion a stirrup, to mount upon the saddle of popularity.—*Sounding* souls are seldom souls that are *sound*. The vote of a Jehu is always linked to the heart of a Judas. Some persons are like *hens*, which no sooner drop their eggs, than they begin to chatter. If such bestow a little money on a church's repairs, it must be recorded upon glazed windows.

How frequently do the enemies of grace lurk under the praises of nature! While an hypocrite is extolled, grace is injured. By how much we arrogate to ourselves, we derogate from God's honour. Vain-glory is like *Naaman's leprosy;* a foul spot upon a fair paper. What are the acclamations of man, to the approbation of God? Of what real advantage is it to be cried up on earth by those about us, and cried down in heaven by him who is above us? One flaw in a diamond diminishes both its splendour and value. Where *self* is the end of our actions, there *Satan* is the rewarder of them.

When thou dost thine alms, let not thy left hand

know what thy right hand doth. Acts of mercy are right-hand acts; but the left hand must not know them, because it will make them known. It is a singular thing for Christians to do much in secret, and to keep it secret when it is done. God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. We need not sound a trumpet for any thing that is bestowed: for when the great trumpet shall sound, every work shall be revealed.

Where the river is the deepest, the water glides the smoothest. Empty casks sound most; whereas the well-fraught vessel silences its own sound. As the shadow of the sun is largest when his beams are lowest; so we are always least, when we make ourselves the greatest. Wicked Saul would rather resign his *crown* than his *honour*. *Honour me before the people.* There is little worth in outward splendour, if grace yield it not an inward lustre.

When the sun of worldly grandeur is in its meridian, it may be masked with a cloud. By climbing too high on the bough of honour, you may hang yourselves on the tree of dishonour. Some would rather suffer the *agony* of the cross, than the *infamy* of the cross. It is worse, in their esteem, to be dispraised, than it is to be destroyed. Thus Abimeleck the fratricide conceived of it. 'A certain woman cast a piece of mill-stone upon Abimeleck's head, and broke his scull; then he called hastily to the young man, his armour bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword and slay me, that men may not say, a woman slew me.' Poor man, he dies, but his pride does not die!

How frequently does God reject those as repro-

bate silver, whom men esteem as fine gold! *He is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of man, but of God.* The praise of an hypocrite is not of God, but of man; the praise of an Israelite is not of man, but of God. The former desires to seem good, that he may be admired; the latter to be good, that God may be honoured. The self-abased saint on earth imitates the angels in heaven; while the self-admired sinner on earth imitates the fallen angels in hell.

The cherubims in Ezekiel's vision *had the hands of a man under their wings.* They had not their wings under their hands; but their hands under their wings. Their hands denoted skill, their wings celerity; and their hands under their wings, the secresy of their actions. They would not have others fall down and worship them, who were only *round* the throne; but they fell down themselves to worship him who is *upon* the throne.

It was foretold of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did the most excellent works that ever were done, *that he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. He should not cry;* that is, he should not be contentious: *he should not lift up his voice in the streets;* that is, he should not be vain-glorious.

How repugnant to this was the conduct of the boasting pharisee! *The pharisee stood, and prayed with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* Hypocrites are better in setting forth their own worth, than their own

wants; in displaying the banners of their perfections, than in discovering the heinousness of their own transgressions. *I am not as other men are!* As if he had been such a fellow, as had had no fellow. Because he was not so bad as most, he thought himself as good as the best. Ambition is so great a planet, that it must have a whole orbit to move in; and is envious at its equals.

A sun-burnt face seems fair, compared with an Ethiopian; but cyphers can never constitute a sum. This pharisee was as far from being religious, as he was from being scandalous. But upon what foundation did he rear his superstructure? *I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all I possess.* He proclaims out of doors, all which was done within. He forgot that he was like the sea, which loses as much on one shore as it gains on another. He hid his sins, which he should have confessed; and published his good deeds, which he should have concealed.

What victory a *formalist* seemingly obtains over one lust, he loses by being overcome of another. He trades not for God's glory, but for his own. If a tear be shed, or a prayer be made, as it is performed by him, so it is divulged by him. He who trafficks in God's service, to freight himself with man's praises, shall suffer shipwreck in the haven.

It is reported of Alexander's *footman*, that he ran so swift upon the sand, that the prints of his footsteps were not to be seen. Thus may it be with Christians. Nothing is more pleasing to God, than a hand liberally opened, and a tongue strictly silent.

Most persons are like Themistocles, who never found himself so much contented, as when he heard himself praised. I will not say a gracious heart never lifts up itself; but I will say, that grace in the heart never lifts it up. Grace in the heart constantly acts like itself; but a gracious heart does not always do so.

Saints should resemble a spire steeple; which is *minimus in summo,* smallest where it is highest: or those orient stars, which the higher they are seated the less they are viewed. Usually, the greatest boasters are the smallest workers. The deep rivers pay a larger tribute to the sea than shallow brooks, and yet empty themselves with less noise. I have read of an *harlot,* who offered to rebuild the walls of a city, which Alexander had demolished, so that she might but set her own arms upon them. What will not a hypocrite do, so he might but see his own signet upon it when it is done!

2. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To bring up the bottom of his life to the top of his light.*

By how far our hearts are set from God's precepts, to love them; by so far are his ears set from our prayers, to answer them. David knew this when he said, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Since the tree of knowledge hath been tasted, the key of knowledge hath been rusted. Therefore, *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Spiritual truths oppose the wickedness of human reason,

because they are against it; therefore it cannot receive them: they also exceed the weakness of human reason, because they are above it; therefore it cannot perceive them. It is better to be a toe in the foot, and that be sound, than to be an eye in the head, and that be blind.

There is a great propriety in the exhortation of St. Peter: *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* No knowledge can equal that of Christ; no growth can equal that of grace. Without grace, there may be *seeming* knowledge; but without grace, there can be no *saving* knowledge.

There were more enlightened, than enlivened, in the days of Christ; hence he said, *If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.* To obey the truth, and not to know it, is impossible; to know the truth, and not obey it, is unprofitable. For, *not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.* Divine knowledge is not as the light of the moon, to sleep by; but as the light of the sun, to work by. It is not a loiterer in the market-place, but a labourer in the vineyard.

A man may be a great scholar, and yet be a great sinner. Judas the traitor was Judas the preacher. The *toad* that has a pearl in its head, has poison in its bowels. The tree of knowledge has often been planted, and flourished, where the tree of life never grew. A man may be acquainted with the grace of truth, and yet not know the truth of grace. Parts, and even all gifts, without grace and holi-

ness, are but like Uriah's letters, which were the death-warrants of him who carried them.

Naked knowledge will be as unserviceable to the soul in a dying day, as a painted fire would be to the frozen body in a cold day. As some articles are tanned by the same sun in which others are whitened, so are some professors hardened under the same gospel by which others are softened.

I would never have that the *brand* of *Christians*, which was the *bane* of *heathens*. *Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* As it is lost labour to smite the flint, if it propagate no sparks; so it is fruitless toil to furnish our heads with light, if it refine not our hearts. Satan may as well put out our eyes, that we should not see the truth; as cut off our feet, that we should not walk in the truth. Naked knowledge may make the head giddy; but it will never make the heart holy.

Who would wait for such a gale, as would drive them farther from the desired haven? or freight their vessels with such a cargo, as would ruin the owner? Shall we hold the candle of the gospel in one hand, and the sword of rebellion in the other? How many professors are there, who have light enough to know what should be done; but have not love enough to do what they know! Such people have no advantage from carrying a bright candle in a dark lanthorn. Give me the professor who perfectly sees the way he should go, and readily goes the way he sees.

That is barren ground, which brings forth nothing except it be forced. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* The sins

of ignorance are most *numerous*; but the sins of knowledge are most *dangerous*. That sinner's darkness will be the greatest in hell, whose light was the clearest on earth.

Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates the king of Pontus, sending a crown to Cæsar, at the time he was in rebellion against him, he refused the present, saying, 'Let him first lay down his rebellion, and then I will receive his crown.' There are many who set a crown of glory upon the head of Christ by a good profession; and yet plat a crown of thorns upon his head by an evil conversation. By the words of our mouth we may affect to adore religion; but it is by the works of our lives that we adorn religion.

It was a just saying of one, 'that in the best reformed churches there were the most deformed professors.' Look to this, reader, that all will be pulled down *without you*, if there be nothing set up *within you*. As trees without fruits are unprofitable; so knowledge without good works is abominable. Leah and Rachel are fit emblems of knowledge and obedience: knowledge, like Rachel, is beautiful; but obedience, like Leah, is fruitful. He that dislikes to do what he knows, will one day not know what to do.

Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Wise as serpents, to guard against the wolf's rapacity; and harmless as doves, that you may do no man any injury. Thus, the serpent's eye is an ornament, when placed in the dove's head. The lives of many professors are awfully unlike their lights. They have the light of the sun, for wis-

dom; but want the heat of a candle for grace and holiness.

I have read of a painter, who being warmly reprehended by a cardinal for putting too much *red* in the faces of St. Paul and St. Peter, answered, 'It is to shew how much they blush at the conduct of many, who style themselves their successors.'— Were Abraham, the father of the faithful, now on earth, how would he disclaim all relation to many who call themselves his offspring! Though there was less grace discovered to the saints of old; yet there was more grace discovered by them. They *knew little,* and *did much;* we *know much,* and *do little.*

John the Baptist *was a burning and a shining light.* To shine is not enough; a *glow-worm* will do so: to burn is not enough; a *firebrand* will do so. Light without heat does but little good; and heat without light does much harm. Give me those Christians who are burning lamps, as well as shining lights.

The sun is as vigorous in his moving, as he is illustrious in his shining. I know the light of nature requires grace to repel the lusts of nature.— Will any say, 'The day of hope is dawning *within* them, when the powers of darkness are ruling *over* them? How monstrous is it, to see a Christian's tongue larger than his hand! To speak so much of God to others, and act so little for God himself!

3. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To prefer the duty he owes to God, to the danger he fears from man.*

Christians, in all ages, have prized their *services*

above their *safety. The wicked flee, when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion.* The fearful hare trembles at every cry; but the courageous lion is unmoved by the greatest clamours. Were believers to shrink back at every contrary wind that blows, they would never make their voyage to heaven.

My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go. Poor Job could hold nothing fast but his *integrity:* Grace kept his heart, when he could not keep his gold. Uprightness is so fair a complexion, as not to be subject to any alteration by the scorching beams of persecution. The *laurel* preserves its verdure amidst the severest blasts of winter. Times of trouble have often been times of triumph to a believer. Suffering seasons have generally been sifting seasons, in which the Christian has lost his chaff, and the hypocrite his courage.

Dangers have frequently made the worldling leave his duties. The scythe of persecution cuts down the tender grass of his devotion. Those who always refuse to carry the yoke of Christ upon their necks, will also refuse to carry the cross of Christ upon their backs. Nothing less than the enjoyment of God, who is altogether good, can permanently support us under the suffering of that which is evil. The *flesh* is an enemy to suffering; because suffering is an enemy to the *flesh.* The *flesh* may make a man an earthly courtier; but it will never make a man a Christian martyr.

Wicked men stumble at every straw in the way to heaven; but they climb over hills in the way to destruction. Hang heavy weights on rotten boughs, and they will suddenly break. If sinners

take up religion in a fair day, they will eagerly lay it down in a foul one. The language of such is, 'Lord, we are willing to serve thee, but unwilling to suffer for thee. We will go to sea with thee, but on condition we have no storms. We have no objections to enter into the war; but upon this promise, that we have no blows.' Such would fain be wafted to the port of felicity, in such vessels as would not be tossed in the sea of calamity. They think too much of wearing a *thorn*, though it be borrowed from Christ's *crown*.

There are some who would sacrifice a stout heart to a stubborn will; and would rather die martyrs for *sin*, than servants to *truth*. How shall those stand *for* Christ, who never stood *in* Christ? True believers are more studious how to *adorn* the cross, than how to *avoid* the cross. They deem it better to be saved in troubled water, than to be drowned in a calm ocean.

Temporary professors are like *hedge-hogs*, which have two holes; one to the north, and another to the south: when the south wind fans them, they turn to the north; and when the north wind chills them, they turn to the south. Thus they lose their activity, to preserve their security.—That was a beggarly saying, which fell from a prince's lips,—'I will sail no farther in the cause of Christ, than while I can preserve my retreat with safety to land.'

Man is a short-sighted creature; he is afraid to follow too far upon the heels of truth, lest it should lead him into danger. *Weak* grace may *do* for God, but it must be *strong* grace that will *die* for God. A true Christian will lay down his lusts at the command of Christ; and his life, for the cause of

Christ. The more a tree of righteousness is shaken by the wind, the more it is rooted in the ground. What, art thou a *member* of Christ, and afraid to be a *martyr* for Christ? If those be blessed who die *in* Christ, what must they be who die *for* Christ!

What, though the flesh do return to dust, so the spirit return to rest? What is the body of a man for a soul to live in, compared with the bosom of Abraham for a soul to lie in? Righteous Abel, the first soldier in the church militant, was the first saint in the church triumphant. He offered up a sacrifice when the altar was sprinkled with his own blood. As his body was the first that ever took possession of the earth; so his soul was the first that ever had a translation to heaven.

Should such a man as I flee? saith Nehemiah:—a man so much owned and honoured of God? It is better to die a conqueror in religion, than to live a coward in religion. Those who are willing to be combatants *for* God, shall also be more than conquerors *through* God. None are so truly courageous, as those who are truly religious. If a Christian live, he knows by whose might he stands; and if he die, he knows for whose sake he falls. Where there is no confidence *in* God, there will be no continuance *with* God. When the wind of faith ceases to fill the sails, the ship of obedience ceases to plough the seas. The taunts of Ishmael shall never make an Isaac disesteem his inheritance.

Reader, if a righteous cause bring you into sufferings, a righteous God will bring you out of sufferings. A Christian is as much indebted to

his enemies as to his friends. The malicious crucifixion of Christ wrought out the glorious exaltation of Christ. The worst that men can do *against* believers, is the best they can do *for* believers. The worst they can do them, is to send them out of the earth; and the best they can do for them, is to send them into heaven.

That was a Christian expression of one of the martyrs to his persecutors: "You take a life from me that I cannot keep, and bestow a life upon me that I cannot lose; which is, as if you should rob me of counters, and furnish me with gold." He that is assured of a life that has no end, need not care how soon this life shall end.

Neither the persecuting hand of men, nor the chastising hand of God, relaxed ancient singular saints. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* Believers resemble the *moon*, which emerges from her eclipse by keeping her motion; and ceases not to shine, because the dogs bark at her. Shall we cease to be professors, because others will not cease to be persecutors?

By the seed of the serpent the heel of the woman may be bruised; but by the seed of the woman the head of the serpent shall be broken. A Christian may enjoy a calm of inward peace, while he sustains the storms of outward trouble. If he enjoy the former, he may expect the latter; if he suffer

the latter, he may expect the former. There is no spring without its fall; no summer without its winter.

"Many waters" (may drown the world, but) "cannot quench love." The water of affliction cannot extinguish the fire of affection. If the calling of religion cannot be peaceably maintained, formalists will quickly shut up their windows. They will rather tarry out of the land of Canaan, than swim to it through the Red Sea. A man will never sustain trouble for Jesus, till he find rest in Jesus.

Adventurous Peter could cry, *Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water.* Love to Christ can walk on the water without drowning, and lie in the fire without burning. It is said of the serpent, "That it cares not to what danger it exposes its body, so it can but secure its head." Thus a Christian cares not to what danger he is liable, so Jesus is but honoured thereby.

Paul, who turned the world upside-down, could not be turned upside-down by the world. *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; so that I might finish my course with joy.* A saint is inwardly pious, when he is not outwardly prosperous. The sharper the medicine is, the sounder the patient is for its operation. The higher the flood swells on earth, the nearer the ark mounts to heaven.

God can strike straight strokes with crooked sticks; and make Satan's dross burnish his choice vessels. Christians are crucified *by* the world, that they might be crucified *to* the world. God makes

it their enemy, that he might make them enemies to it. Religion is that *phœnix*, which has always flourished in its own ashes. While magistrates defend the truth with their sword, martyrs defend it with their blood. The loss of their heads hastens the reception of their crowns.

We should never land in triumph at the haven of rest, if we were not tossed upon the sea of trouble. If Joseph had not been Egypt's prisoner, he had never been Egypt's governor. The iron chains about his feet ushered in the golden chains about his neck. Temporal losses are only gentle breezes; but eternal losses are insupportable storms.

Reader, tell me, is not Christ, with his cross, for a few years, better than Dives, with his dainties, for a few days? What comparison is there between the short-lived happiness of the wicked, attended with everlasting misery; and the short-lived misery of the righteous, attended with everlasting happiness?

4. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To seek the public good of others above the private good of himself.*

The sentiment of Plato, an heathen, is worthy to be adopted by every Christian: "I was not born for myself alone; for my country claims a part, my relations claim a part, and my friends claim a part in me." As we are not born *by* ourselves, so we are not born *for* ourselves.

Baruch, the man of God, was forbid to make *self* the centre of his wishes: *Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.* For saints to set their hearts upon that whereon beasts set their feet, is

as if a king should abdicate his throne, to follow the plough; or, as if a man should desert a golden mine, to dig in a pit of gravel. When we *search* ourselves, it denotes that we are virtuous; but when we *seek* ourselves, it denotes that we are covetous.

I am unwilling to draw a defective feature in any man's picture; yet how many are there, who have occupied public places with private spirits! While they pretended to undertake every thing for the good of others; it has appeared, that they undertook nothing, but for the good of themselves. Such suckers at the roots have drawn away the sap and nourishment from the tree. They have set kingdoms on fire, that they might roast their own venison at the flames. These drones stealing into the hive, have fed upon the honey; while the labouring bees have been famished.

Too many resemble ravenous birds, which at first seem to bewail the dying sheep; but at last, are found picking out their eyes. These people never want fire, so long as any yard affords fuel. They enrich their own side-board with other men's plate.

There is a *proverb*, but none of Solomon's, 'Every man for himself, and God for us all.' But where every man is for himself, the devil will have *all*. Whosoever is a seeker of himself, is not found of God. Though he may find himself in this life, he will lose himself in death.

The public spirit of Seneca is a sharp censure to many private-spirited Christians: 'I would so live,' said he, 'as if I knew I received my being only for the benefit of others.'

How justly might that complaint be taken up, which was so sadly laid down by Paul: *For all men seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's!* If some heathens excel Christians, it is not because Christianity does not surpass heathenism. A selfish man will not sow his seed, except he reap the whole harvest; nor plant the vines, except he press all the grapes into his own vessel. The wheel of his diligence will not move, except the oil of profit be in it. It may be said to many, as a great personage once said to his servant; 'Your rise, has been my fall.'

If Dives be tormented because he refused to impart his own; what shall their torment be, who avidiously take that which is another's! If those fingers be cut off which so closely clap their own property; what will become of those hands, which are always open to grasp at other men's!

It was Israel's lamentation, *That those who were once clad in scarlet, embraced the dunghill.* It may now be England's lamentation, *That many who once embraced the dunghill, are now, by injustice, clothed in scarlet.* Every man's private interest is best secured in the public good. A drop of water will soon be dried up if alone; but, in the ocean, it will retain its moisture. A single beam of light is suddenly obscured; but in the body of the sun, it retains its splendour.

Too many, in all ages, have turned a common weal into a common woe. They have spun themselves superfine suits, out of the nation's fleece. Many noble birds have been deplumed, that their wings might be richly feathered. When any

springs have been opened, they have laid pipes to convey the water into their own cisterns. Such pretended pilots have steered the ship of plenty into their own haven; but justice will certainly squeeze such spunges, and leave them as dry at last as they were at first. All those moths shall be destroyed, which eat into other men's garments.

For a man to advance his interest out of another's property, is to keep all the meat in his mouth, and starve all the body beside. Naturally every man is his own Alpha and his own Omega. He has his beginning *from* himself, and his ending *in* himself.

That was a morose speech of Cain to the Almighty; *Am I my brother's keeper?* He thought it was not his duty to be his brother's keeper, but did not consider that it was against his duty to be his brother's assassin. There are many who will not be their brother's keepers, and yet will be their butchers. They have riveted themselves to their possessions by the bones of their murdered brethren; and paved causeways to honour with the sculls of honest men.

Self-seeking has been so long pulling the ropes, that it has rung the passing-bell of many nations. It is sad to see the house in flames, while the chamber is being furnished; the ship sinking, while the cabin is filling; or the tree falling, while the nest is a building. But better fruit cannot grow upon the trees of cruelty, than wantonness and oppression. God will compel them to drink the dregs of that cup, which they have so unjustly mingled for others.

Queen Esther was a singular saint; for she pre-

ferred the public to her private good. *If I perish, I perish. For how can I endure to see the evil which shall come upon my people?* This Israelitess was not more comely in appearance than benevolent in her disposition. She did not prefer her own life to her people's, but her people's to her own.

When Theodosius lay on his dying pillow, he was more studious how to do his kingdom good, than how to sustain his torturing pains; as appears by his counsel to his sons, to whom he left it. 'I counsel you to be deeply concerned for the promotion of religion, and the good of man; for by this (said he) peace will be preserved, and wars no more known.'

Though the *eagle* be the queen of birds, as the *lion* is the king of beasts; yet she was not offered up in sacrifice, because she lived upon the spoil of others. Grace teaches a Christian not only to act like a man to God, but also like a God to man.

Our Lord Jesus Christ pleased not himself; that thereby, he might eternally profit us. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor; that ye through his poverty might be rich.* A *drop* of his blood is worth more than a *sea* of ours; and yet he died our death, that we might live his life; and suffered our hell, to bring us to his heaven. He lay in the feeble arms of his mother, that we might lie in the tender bosom of his Father. His love began in his eternal purposes of grace; and ends in our eternal possession of glory.

Why was the bread of life an hungred, but to feed

the hungry with the bread of life? Why was rest itself weary, but to give the weary rest? Why did he hang upon the cross on Mount Calvary, but that we might sit upon the throne on Mount Sion? His shining face was covered with spittle, that our disfigured faces might be enamelled with glory! Why did this Jonah cast himself into the sea of his father's wrath, but to save the ship of his church from sinking? Christ is not only the vessel in which the waters of life are contained; but he is also the pipes through which they are conveyed.

If the mountains overflow with moisture, the valleys are the richer: but if the head be full of ill humours, the whole body is the worse. Happy are those persons, whom God will use as besoms, to sweep out the dust from his temple; or who shall tug at an oar, in the boat where Christ and his church are embarked.

David was a king that ruled in righteousness, and studied not so much to make himself great, as to make his people happy. *For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell asleep.* His royal services were not swallowed up in the narrow gulf of self. He did not draw all his lines to the ignoble centre of his own ends. Such birds are bad in the nest; but worse when their wings are fledged, to fly abroad. He served his *own* generation, not the preceding; for that was dead before he was alive; nor the succeeding, for he was dead before that was alive.

Every gracious spirit is public; but every public spirit is not gracious. God may use the mid-

wifery of the Egyptians to bring forth the children of Israelites. An iron key may open a golden treasury; and leaden pipes convey pleasant waters. Though earthly blessings may be communicated to a spiritual man, yet spiritual blessings will not be communicated to a carnal man.

While meteors keep above in the firmament, they yield a pleasing lustre; but when they decline, and fall to the earth, they come to nothing.

Though the name of the author of *Psal.* cxxxvii. be not recorded; yet his generous disposition should ever be admired. *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Good old Eli mourned more for the loss of religion, than for the loss of his relations. His heart was broken before his neck. If the church be lost, Christians cannot be saved; if the church be saved, Christians cannot be lost.

Augustus Cæsar possessed such an entire attachment to his country, that he called it *his own daughter*, and refused to be called *its master;* because he ruled it, not by fear, but by love. After his decease, his disconsolate people lamented over him, saying, 'O would to God that he had never lived, or that he had never died!' Those whose lives deserve no praises, their death deserves no tears.

A self-seeker lives unrespected, and dies unlamented. When once a man becomes a *God* to himself, he then becomes a *devil* to others. Such an one cares not who sinks, so he does but arrive safe at shore. Those execrable wretches, whose

conduct is recorded in the *Acts*, cared not whether a whole city lost their souls, so that a few shrine-makers might but preserve their gain.

It is reported of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who being told, 'that if ever her son came to be an Emperor, he would be her murderer,' she made this reply, 'I am content to perish, if he may be Emperor.' What she expressed vain-gloriously, that we should do religiously: 'Let us perish, so our neighbours, our relations, and our country be bettered; or the gospel, or the Saviour, be honoured.' But there are many who entirely reverse this language; if not in words, yet in heart they say, 'Let relations, neighbours, country, and religion perish, so we are benefited thereby.'

Such was the public spirit of Moses, that when the Lord proposed to him to destroy Israel, and to make a great nation of him, he became intercessor for them; yea, even when they were ready to stone him. His affection, as a ruler, was stronger than his affection as a father. Thus Joshua, his honourable successor, so far imitated him, that he first divided Canaan into several allotments and portions for the tribes of Israel, before he made any provision for his own family. Give me such carvers as lay not all the meat upon their own dishes.

5. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To have the most beautiful conversation among the blackest persons.*

As an ungodly man poisons the air in which he breathes; so he pollutes the age in which he lives. The putrid grape corrupts the sound cluster. Pious

Joseph, by living in the court of Pharaoh, had learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh. A high-priest's hall instructed Peter how to disclaim his suffering master. Fresh waters lose their sweetness, by gliding into the salt sea. Those who sail among the rocks, are in danger of splitting their ships.

When vice runs in a single stream, it is then a fordable shallow; but when many of these meet together, they then swell a deeper channel. The Lord has appointed from the beginning, that enmity shall subsist between the righteous seed of the woman and the unrighteous seed of the serpent.—There must be no *harmony*, where the chief musician will have a *jar*. It is far better to have the ungodly man's enmity, than his society. By the former, he is most hateful; but by the latter, he is most hurtful. A religious man in the company of wicked men, is like a green branch among dry and burning brands; they can sooner kindle him, than he can quench them.

As sheep among the thorns injure their fleeces; so saints among sinners do an injury to their graces. Hence it is said, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* To see a saint and a sinner maintaining familiar intercourse with each other, is to behold the living and the dead keeping house together. The godly are more frequently corrupted by the evil deportment of the worldling,

than the worldling is refined by the chaste conversation of the godly.

The impious lives of the wicked are as contagious as the most fearful plague that infects the air. When the doves of Christ lie among such pots, their yellow feathers are sullied. You may observe, that in the oven the fine bread frequently hangs upon the coarse; but the coarse very seldom adheres to the fine. If you mix an equal portion of sour vinegar and sweet wine together; you will find that the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine sweeten the vinegar.

That is a sound body that continues healthful in a pest-house. It is a far greater wonder to see a saint maintain his purity among sinners, than it is to behold a sinner becoming pure among saints. Christians are not always like fish, which retain their freshness in the salt sea; or like the rose, which preserves its sweetness among the most noisome weeds; or like the fire, which burns the hottest when the season is coldest.

A good man was once heard to lament, 'that as often as he went into the company of the wicked, he returned less a man from them, than he was before he joined with them.' As it is a singular thing to touch melting pitch, and not be defiled; so it is for saints so to act toward sinners as to do much good for them, and receive no injury from them. If we cannot help them, it is their unholiness; if they hurt us, it is our unhappiness. The Lord's people, by keeping evil company, are like persons who are much exposed to the sun, insensibly tanned.

Every Christian is a light *in* the world; though

he be not *the* light of the world. *Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* O that Christians were more like the light, which abides pure, though the air be corrupted in which it dwells! Men may defile themselves in the light; but they cannot defile the light itself. The sun shines throughout an impure world, and yet knows no impurity. Ah, how many resemble swine in the fairest meadow; which would break every mound to find the mire! They remind me of impious Judas, who, instead of being a disciple amongst devils, was a devil amongst disciples. Poor man, he was all precept, and no example. He could attempt to reprove one, who was innocence itself; and encourage one, who was sin itself.

Religious company brings fire to our graces, to kindle them when they are freezing; but irreligious company brings water to quench them, when they are flaming.

It is observed by some, 'that the sweetest flowers may be found among the most offensive herbs.' The poets affirm, that 'Venus never appeared so beautiful, as when she sat by black Vulcan's side.' This we are beyond a doubt concerning, that Stephen's face never shone so gloriously in the church, where he was admired; as in the council, where he was abhorred. Had he been like them, they had not disliked him. Had not God given him *spiritual* life, they would never have put him to an *ignominious* death. How will the fire consume *dry* fuel, when it prevailed to such a degree over the *green!*

That jewel must needs be glorious in the sun, which glitters in the shade. There are certainly *many* men, who can suit with *any* men. They can be professors with professors, and scorners amongst scorners. One day, they can join the multitude in shouting *Hosannah!* In another day, they can join the pharisees in crying, *Crucify him, crucify him!*— Thus they are like the planet Mercury, in the horoscope of man's nativity; good, in conjunction with those who are good; and evil, in conjunction with those who are evil.

Every man loves to be admired; and is too apt to take pleasure in none but those who take pleasure in him. It is no honourable appearance, when we cease to be exemplary Christians, that others may think us good companions. It is impossible to be conformed to the world in our outward man; and transformed to God in our inward man. There is no such a thing as being an *outward heathen,* and an *inward Christian.* There is but little difficulty in Englishing the Spanish proverb: 'Tell me where you go, and I will tell you what you do.' We say, 'that birds of a feather will flock together.' To be too intimate with sinners, is to intimate, that we are sinners.

As soon as the disciples were let go, they returned to their own company. With whom should believers join, but with believers? There is no trusting the tamest nature with the savage monster without manifest danger. It is running a great risk, to be found cohabiting in that house, where God is not found dwelling. There is no sleeping with dogs, without swarming with vermin.

That is a royal diadem, which Christ places upon the head of his spouse: *As a lily among thorns; so is my beloved among the daughters.* There are many thorns among the lilies; but there are not many lilies among the thorns. It is a choice spectacle to behold, when a believer preserves his spiritual beauty amidst the tents of Kedar; or when he is like Noah, a new man in an old world. Had Lot been polluted with Sodom's sin, he might have been consumed in Sodom's flames.

It is ill breathing in an infectious air. Satan's progeny love not to go to hell without society. It is far better to be with *Philpot* in a coal-house, than with a *Bonner* in a palace. A man may pass through Ethiopia, and yet be unchanged; but he cannot take up his residence there, without being changed.

Ecclesiastical history reports of Valens, the emperor, that he, by marrying an Arian lady, was corrupted with that error. 'Come out of her, my people; that you be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' If Rome leave us in the foundation; let us leave her in the superstructure. Where she departs from God, there let us depart from her. For when such worms breed in the *body* of a nation, they will soon eat out the *bowels* of religion. Not to guard against such wasps, is to expose ourselves to the venom of their stings.

6. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To chuse the worst of sorrows, before he will commit the least of sins.*

The wicked entirely *reverse* this; for they will

prefer the greatest sin to the least sufferings. This is to leap out of the burning pan into the consuming flame. By seeking to shun an *external* calamity, they rush into *eternal* misery. Spira, by labouring to preserve his outward estate, exposed himself to the most bitter reproaches of conscience. This is as if a man should lose his head to preserve his hat; or, as if the mariner should sink the sailing vessel to avoid the rising storm.

Above every evil, we should consider sin as the greatest evil. Sin is the only *butt* at which all the arrows of divine vengeance are shot. Sinners are those spiders which weave their own webs, and are afterward entangled in them. Our own destruction is but the fruit of our own transgression.

Sin has every evil subjoined to it; it is the fountain and origin of them all. Thus the prophet viewed it: *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* When man had no evil *within* him, he had no evil *upon* him. He began to be sorrowful, when he began to be sinful. When the soul shall be fully released from the guilt of iniquity, the body shall be wholly delivered from the burthen of infirmity. Sorrow shall never be a visitant, where sin is not an inhabitant. The *former* would be a foreigner, if the *latter* were not a sojourner.

God is as far from beating his children *for* nothing, as he is from beating them *to* nothing. A hole in the ship will sink it to the bottom. A small bite from a serpent will affect the whole body. There is no way to calm the sea, but by excommunicating Jonah from the ship. If the root be

killed, the branches will soon be withered. If the spring be diminished, there is no doubt but the streams will soon fail. Where the fuel of corruption is removed, there the fire of affliction is extinguished.

The wages of sin is death. As the works of sin are dishonourable; so the wages of sin are mortal. The corruption of nature is the cause of the dissolution of nature. The candle of our lives is blown out by the wind of our lusts. Sin is that noxious weed, which overtops the choicest corn;—that offensive smoke, which depresses the rising flame;—and that dismal cloud, which overshadows the beaming sun.

Were it not for sin, death would never have had a beginning: were it not for death, sin would never have an ending. Man, as a creature, is a debtor to the commands of God, as a sovereign; but as a sinner, he is a debtor to the severity of God, as a judge.

What is so sweet a good as Christ? and what is so great an evil as lust? Sin has brought many a believer into suffering; and suffering has instrumentally kept many a believer out of sin. It is better to be preserved in brine, than to rot in honey. The bitterest medicine is to be preferred by all wise men, before the sweetest poison. In the same fire wherein the dross is consumed, the precious gold is refined.

There are many thousands of souls, who had never obtained the hopes of heaven, if they had not been brought thither by the gates of hell. As every mercy is a drop derived from the ocean of God's

goodness; so every misery is a dram weighed out by the supreme wisdom of God's providence.

When Exdoxia angrily threatened St. Chrysostom with banishment, he calmly replied; 'Go tell her, I fear nothing but sin.' He who serves God, need fear nothing so much as sin.

Those who launch out into any undertaking, should always previously look well to their tackling, lest a destructive storm should overtake them in their voyage. A bad conscience imbitters the sweetest comforts; but a good conscience sweetens the bitterest crosses. How great a wound do vices make in the conscience; yea, even in our infant years! Though the hardened sinner be not afraid to *do* evil; yet he will be afraid to *suffer* evil. What need those *fear* a cross on the *back*, who *feel* a Christ in their *heart?*

The water without the ship may toss it; but it is the water within the ship which sinks it. It is better to have the body consumed to ashes for the sake of Christ; than to have the soul dwell in everlasting burnings, through being ashamed of Christ. Though Christians have no warrant to expect that they shall live here *without* afflictions; yet in the exercise of them, faith will teach them to live *above* afflictions.

That noble servant of Christ, Ignatius, gloried in reproaches for his Lord. *I verily delight to suffer for Christ; but I know not whether I am worthy to suffer.* Every Christian's *Patmos* is his way to *paradise.*

Suppose the furnace be heated *seven* times hotter? yet God can make the sufferer *seventy* times

happier. Those who are here crossed for *well-doing*, shall hereafter be crowned with the *well-dying*. There are none more welcome to the spiritual Canaan, than those who swim to it through the red sea of their own blood.

Christian Reader, when you come into the world, you do but live to die again: and when you leave the world, you do but die to live again. What is the grain the worse, for the fan by which it is winnowed? or the gold, for the fire by which it is refined?

Pendleton, a self-confident professor, promised to fry out his fat body in the flames of martyrdom, rather than betray religion; but when the trial approached, he changed his note, and said, 'I came not into the world burning, neither will I go out of the world flaming.'

Those who refuse to give up their *lusts* for Christ, will never be inclined to give up their *lives* for Christ. Paul and Silas had their prison songs in their prison sufferings. Those caged birds sang with as much melody, as any which have sky liberty. Thus Ignatius, in his epistle to the persecutors of the church, gloried, saying, *The wild beasts may grind me, as corn between their teeth: but I shall by that become as choice bread, in the hand of my God.*

I have read an account of a woman, who was imprisoned for her religion; and being in travail, she cried out with pain. The keeper derided her, saying, 'How can you endure the fire, seeing you make so much noise in bringing forth a child?' 'Very well,' said she, 'for now I suffer as a sin-

ner, but then I shall suffer for my Saviour.' There is more real evil in a particle of corruption, than in an ocean of tribulation. In suffering, the offence is offered to us; in sinning, the offence is committed against God.

In suffering, there is an infringement of man's liberty; in sinning, there is a denial of God's authority. The evil of suffering is *transient;* but the evil of sin is *permanent.* In suffering, we lose the favour of men; but in sinning, we hazard the favour of God.

The rose is sweeter under the still where it drops, than upon the stalk whereon it grows. The face of godliness is never so beautiful as when it is spit upon. The best of wheat is that which sustains all the drifts of wintry snow.

That was an heroic saying of Vincentius, to his hardened persecutors: 'You may rage and do your worst: but you shall find the spirit of God administering more strength to the tormented, than the spirit of the devil affording strength to my tormentors.' Where professors chuse that which is truly best; there let malicious persecutors do their worst. Though you may feel their might, yet you need not feel their malice. *They* can have no just grounds of fear, whose confidence is in God. Life is only to be desired, by those to whom death would be no gain.

It is reported of Hooper the martyr, that when he was going to suffer, a certain person addressed him, saying, 'O Sir, take care of yourself, for life is sweet, and death is bitter.' 'Ah, I know that,' replied he; 'but the life to come is full of more

sweetness than this mortal life; and the death to come is full of more bitterness than this uncommon death.' A man may suffer without sinning; but he cannot sin without suffering.

When Philip inquired of Demosthenes, whether he was afraid to lose his head; he answered, 'No; for if I do lose it, the Athenians will bestow an immortal one upon me.'

That was animating language which dropped from the lips of the three children, or rather of the three champions: *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image, that thou hast set up.* Either they must sin foully, or suffer sadly. They must either bow to a golden image, or burn in a flaming furnace. But they were as far from worshipping his gods, as he was from worshipping their God.

The beloved Daniel chose rather to lie in the den of lions, than shamefully desert the cause of the Lamb. Shall not we, for his sake, bear the wrath of man, who for our sakes bore the wrath of God? Though obedience be better than sacrifice, yet sometimes for a man to sacrifice himself is the best obedience. He that loses a *base* life for Christ, shall hereafter find a *better* life in Christ.

When Herod and Nicetes attempted to turn Polycarp from the faith, by insinuating that 'there was no evil in calling Cæsar, Lord, and offering

sacrifices to him;' he replied, that 'He had served Jesus Christ for many years, and had always found him a good master; that he should therefore submit himself to all the tortures they should inflict, rather than deny him.'

Moses, that memorable worthy, *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* What is a cup of physic, which removes a disease, compared with a cup of poison, which takes away the life? Those who live upon God in the *use* of the creature, can also live upon him in the *loss* of the creature. That was a noble expression of a noble Christian: 'Whatsoever I thankfully receive, as a token of God's love to me; I part with contentedly, as a token of my love to him.'

For a righteous man, scarcely will one die; yet peradventure, for a good man, some would even dare to die. Shall one even dare to die for a good *man?* and shall we refuse to die for a good *God?*

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection. Some would have used any picklock, to have opened a passage to their liberty; but they knew too much of another world, to bid at so high a rate for the present.

It is reported of Hormisdas, a nobleman of Persia, who being degraded of all his promotions, because he would not change his profession; that afterward his persecutors restored them all again, and solicited him to deny Christ: but he rent his purple robe, and laid all his honours at the feet of the Emperor, saying, 'If you restore these honours,

with an intention to make me desert my Saviour; I beg leave to decline accepting them, upon such conditions.'—Good man! he thought, and that justly too, that Christ without worldly honour was better, than worldly honour without Christ.

It is recorded concerning one of the martyrs, that when he was going to the stake, a nobleman besought him, in a compassionate manner, to take care of his soul. 'So I will,' he replied, 'for I give my body to be burnt, rather than have my soul defiled.' How many professors are there, who would rather have sinful self satisfied, than crucified!

As the power of grace comes in at one door, the love of vice will go out at another. The only way to have the house of Saul weakened, is to get the house of David strengthened. Those Philistines, who wanted fortitude to meet Samson when he was in vigour, could insultingly dance round him when he was in affliction.

Reader, consider seriously, that it is sin which in this life debases a person, and in the next life destroys him. Their state must be awful, whose end is damnation; because their damnation is without end. No condition can be so intolerably doleful, as that which is unalterably painful.

A certain person, on seeing a Christian woman go cheerfully to prison, said to her, 'O you have not yet tasted of the bitterness of death.' She as cheerfully answered, 'No, nor never shall; for Christ hath promised that those who keep his sayings shall never see death.' A believer may feel the stroke of death; but he shall never feel the

sting of death. The first death may bring his body to corruption; but the second death shall never bring his soul to destruction. Though he may endure the cross; yet he shall not endure the curse. There can be no condemnation to those Christians, who belong to Christ.

7. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To be a father to all in charity, and yet a servant to all in humility.*

First, To be a father to all in charity. That crop that is sown in *mercy,* shall be reaped in glory. In heaven there are riches enough; but no poor to receive them. In hell there are poor enough; but no rich to relieve them. How many of the most wealthy are deaf to the most importunate requests for mercy! They will do no good *in* the world, with the goods *of* the world. They too much resemble spunges; which greedily suck up the waters, but will not yield a return of them again, till they are well squeezed.

Necessity is not likely to be supplied by the hand of *misery;* while there are so many, that would help, *cannot,* for want of ability; and so many, who may help, *will not,* for want of charity. There is not a *drop* of water for such a *Dives* in hell, who has not a *crumb* of bread for a poor distressed Lazarus upon earth. Every act of charity is but an act of equity. It is not the bestowment of our gifts; but the payment of our debts.

The rich man's superfluity was ordained to relieve the poor man's necessity. A lady, on giving sixpence to a beggar, accosted him thus: 'I have now given you more than ever God gave me.' To

whom he replied, 'No, madam; God hath given you all your abundance.' 'That is your mistake,' said she, 'for he hath but lent it me, that I might bestow it on such as you.'

John, the beloved disciple of Christ, inculcates the doctrine of love to the disciples of Christ: *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.* As holiness works a likeness to him that begets it; so it works a love to those who enjoy it. It is impossible for any one to love the person of Christ, who does not delight in the picture of Christ. He that loves *himself,* will not hate his *brother.* While he is out of charity with his brother, he shews that God is out of charity with him; and we lose more for want of God's love, than our brethren lose for want of our love.

He is not a covetous man, who lays up something *providentially;* but he is a covetous man, who gives out nothing *willingly.* He is as prudent a man, who sometimes distributes discreetly, as he who accumulates hastily. Men frequently discover more wisdom in laying out, than in laying up.

Reader, the hope of living long on earth should not make you covetous; but the prospect of living long in heaven should make you bounteous. Though the sun of charity *rise at home;* yet it should always *set abroad.*

Seneca, the heathen, inculcates a principle worthy the credence of every Christian: 'I believe, I truly enjoy no more of the world's affluence, than what I willingly distribute to the necessit-

ous.' Without your mercy, the poor cannot live on earth; and without God's mercy, you shall not live in heaven. Some men's *churlishness* entirely swallows up their charitableness. Instead of *praying* one for another, they are making a *prey* one of another.

When I consider that our hearts are no softer, I wonder that the times are no harder. It is a reproach to many rich men, that God should give them so much, and that they should give the poor so little.

Some observe that the most barren grounds are nearest to the richest mines. It is too often true in a spiritual sense, that those, whom God hath made the most fruitful in estates, are most barren in good works. It is too generally true, that the rich spend their substance wantonly, while the poor give their alms willingly. A penny comes with more difficulty out of a bag that is pressing full; than a shilling out of a purse that is half empty.

Wherefore doth the Lord make your cup run over, but that other men's lips might taste the liquor? The showers that fall upon the highest mountains, should glide into the lowest valleys. *Give, and it shall be given you,* is a maxim little believed.

It is infidelity which is the spring of all cruelty; so that, wheresoever you can discover the face of one, you may also hear the sound of the other's feet. If you deny relief to those who are virtuous, you kill laborious bees; if you bestow your gifts on those who are vicious, you do but support drones:

but it is better to favour a bastard, than to murder a legitimate child. God looks not so much on the merits of the beggar, as upon the mercy of the giver.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Here is a trinity of precepts, from a trinity of persons. Pharisees delight more to plead this precept, than to practise it; which is, as if a man should cry up the kindness of his king, and at the same time join in rebellion against him. If all were rich, no alms need be received; if all were poor, no alms could be bestowed.

God, who could have made all men wealthy, hath made most men poor; that the poor might have Christ for an example of patience, and the rich for an example of goodness. *Cruelty* is one of the highest *scandals* to piety; for instead of turning lions into lambs, it turns lambs into lions.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Clemency is one of the brightest diamonds in the crown of majesty. How cheerfully should we take off the copy, when we consider who has set us the example! *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* What one scripture calls *mercy*, the other styles *perfection*; as if this one perfection of mercy included all. He that sheweth mercy when it may be best spared, will receive mercy when it shall most be needed.

It is reported of one of the Dukes of Savoy, that, being asked by certain ambassadors at his court

what hounds he kept; he conducted them into a large room, where there were a number of poor people sitting at table. 'These,' said he, 'are all the hounds I have upon earth; and with whom I am in pursuit of the kingdom of heaven.' It is counted an honour to *live* like princes; but it is a greater honour to *give* like princes.

Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. The flames of piety towards God must be accompanied with the incense of charity towards man. Mercy is so good a servant, that it will never suffer its master to die a beggar.

Those who have drained their own wells dry, in order to fill the poor man's cistern, shall never perish for want of water to quench their thirst. Those who have blessed others, shall be blessed themselves.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. Mercy is the queen of beauty, and the blessed offspring of the King of glory.

Scarce any virtue in the whole scripture has been returned with greater interest than the love of mercy. Though charity may make your purse lighter one day; yet it will make it heavier another. All who have their names registered in the book of eternity, will have the poor man's distresses recorded upon the heart of sympathy: for though

they be so *poor* as to be unable to *relieve* him; yet they are so *tender* as to *pity* him. I know no better way to preserve your meal, than by parting with your cake. Methinks, full breasts should milk themselves without drawing; and large springs should send forth their waters without pumping. Your benevolence should seek the poor, before the poor seek your benevolence.

Put on, therefore, (as the elect of God) bowels of mercy. He that hath put off the bowels of compassion, hath put off the badge of election. Many can love at their *tongue's end;* but the godly love at their *finger's end.* If a man be naked, it is easy for the miser to bid him be clothed; or if he be empty, he can easily bid him be filled; as if poor Christians were like chameleons, able to live upon the air. Liberality does not consist in good words, but in good works. The doubtful are to be resolved by our *counsels;* but the necessitous are to be relieved by our *morsels.* Methinks it is exceedingly lovely to behold the pictures of purity, though they be hung in the frames of poverty.

Reader, would you be covetous of any thing? let it be rather to lay out on necessity, than to lay up for posterity. Hospitality is seed; and the husbandman does not become wealthy by *saving,* but by *sowing* of his seed.

Secondly, A servant to all in humility.

Our first fall was by rising against God; but our best rise, is by falling down before him. The acknowledgement of our own impotence, is the only stock upon which the Lord ingrafts divine assistance.

A humble saint looks most like a citizen of heaven. *Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.* He is the most *lovely* professor, who is the most *lowly* professor. As incense smells the sweetest when it is beaten smallest; so saints look fairest when they lie lowest. Arrogance in the soul resembles the spleen in the body; which grows most, while other parts are decaying. God will not suffer such a weed to grow in his garden, without taking some course to root it up. A believer is like a vessel cast into the sea; the more it fills, the more it sinks.

Pride goeth before destruction; and an haughty spirit before a fall. The flowing river quickly turns to an ebbing water. It is not all the world that can pull a humble man down, because God will exalt him; nor is it all the world that can keep a proud man up, because God will debase him.

Do but mark how one of the *best* of saints views himself as one of the *least* of saints: *For I am the least of the apostles; that am not meet to be called an apostle.* In the highest heavens, the beams of majesty are displayed; but to the lowest hearts, the bowels of mercy are discovered. *Be ye clothed with humility.* Pride is a sinner's torment, but humility is a saint's ornament. The cloth of humility should always be worn on the back of Christianity.

God many times places a thorn in the flesh, to pierce the bladder of pride. He makes us feel a sense of our misery, that we may sue for his unmerited mercy. The *first Adam* was for self-advancement; but the *second Adam* is for self-abasement: the former was for having self *deified*; the latter is for having self *crucified*.

Though there may be something *left* by self-denial; yet there can be nothing *lost* by self-denial: nay, a man can never enjoy himself till he be brought to deny himself. We live, by dying to ourselves; and die, by living to ourselves. There is no proud man, but what is foolish; and scarcely any foolish man, but what is proud. It is the night-owl of ignorance, which broods and hatches the peacock of pride.

God abhors them worst, who adore themselves most. Pride is not a *Bethel*, that is, a house where God dwells; but a *Babel*, that is, a noisome dungeon in which satan abides. It is not only a most *hateful* evil; but it is a *radical* evil. As all other lusts are found lodging in it; so they are found springing from it. It is a foul leprosy, in the face of morality; and a hurtful worm, gnawing at the root of humility. It is a swelling dropsy within, and a spreading plague without.

Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud; but giveth grace unto the humble. Give me the homely vessel of humility, which God shall preserve, and fill with the wine of his grace; rather than the varnished cup of pride, which he will dash in pieces, like a potter's vessel. Where humility is the corner-stone, there glory shall be the top-stone.

It is impossible to have true thoughts of ourselves, while we entertain high thoughts of ourselves. *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.* Poor Peter, he was the most impotent, when he was the most arrogant. He had no doubt of standing, while others were falling; but it proved at last, that he fell while others stood.

That was an excellent saying of one: 'Where a gracious person would sit below me, I will acknowledge his dignity; but where a proud person would move above me, I would abhor his vanity.' An humble heart may meet with opposition from man; but it shall meet with approbation from God. As humility is a grace very excellent in itself; so it is very pleasing to God. He who is a subject of the former, shall hereafter be an inheriter with the latter.

8. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To mourn most before God, for those lusts which appear least before men.*

Others cannot mourn in secret for *public sins*, but we should mourn in public for our *secret sins*. That must be sought with *repentance*, which has been so long lost by *disobedience*. Outward acts are most *scandalous* among men, but inward lusts are most *dangerous* before God. Reader, if you would know the heart of your sin, then you must know the sins of your heart; for, *out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* These streams of defilement which appear in your life, do but shew what a fountain of wickedness there is in your heart. Even *the thought of foolishness is sin. When sin hath conceived, it bringeth forth death.* There is no sin so little as not to kindle an eternal fire: its first-born is *death*, and its last-born is *hell*.

Though repentance be the act of man, yet it is the gift of God: it requires the same power to melt the heart, as to make it. As we are deeply fallen

from a state of innocence, so we should rise to a state of penitence. Those sins shall never make a hell for us, which are a hell to us. Some people do nothing more than make work for repentance, and yet do nothing less than repent of their works. They have sin enough for all their sorrows, but not sorrow enough for all their sins. Their eyes are casements to let in lusts, when they should be flood-gates to pour out tears.

When godly sorrow takes possession of the house, it will quickly shut sin out of doors. There must be a falling out with our lust, before there can be a genuine falling off from our lusts: a loathing of sin in our affections, before a true leaving of sin in our actions. It is an hearty mourning for our transgressions, which makes way for a happy funeral of our corruptions.

O sinner, you have filled the *book* of God with your *sins;* and will you not fill the *bottle* of God with your *tears?* Remember, that when Christ draws the likeness of the new creature, his first pencil is dipped in water. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Is it not better to repent without perishing, than to perish without repenting? Godly sorrow is such a grace, as *without* it, not a soul shall be saved, and *with* it, not a soul shall be lost. Is it not therefore better to swim in the *water-works* of repentance, than to burn in the *fire-works* of vengeance? Think not that the tears which in hell are offered, will in the least abate the torments which in hell are suffered.

Repentance is an invaluable grace, for it is the bestowment of an invaluable Saviour. *Him hath*

God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. As a Prince he gives repentance, and as a Priest he gives pardon. Our humiliation is the fruit of his exaltation: as he was abased for the creature's *advancement*, so he was exalted for the creature's *abasement*. Remember, sinner, if your heart be not broken in you, your guilt is not broken from you. If you lay not your sins to heart, that you may be *humbled*; God will lay your sins to your charge, that you may be *damned*. Though repentance be not a pardon's *obtainer*; yet it is a pardon's *fore-runner*.

He that lives in sin, without repentance; shall die in sin, without forgiveness. There is no coming to the fair haven of glory, without sailing through the narrow strait of repentance. Christ Jesus rejoices over those as blessed, who mourn over themselves as cursed. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Out of the saltest water, God can brew the sweetest liquor. The skilful bee gathers the best honey from the bitterest herbs. When the cloud has been dissolved into a shower, there presently follows a glorious sunshine. The more a stone is wounded by the hand of the engraver, the greater beauty is superinduced thereon. By groans unutterable, the Lord ushers in joys unspeakable.

None do more sing in the possession of Christ, than such as most lament the departure of Christ; usually their joys are commensurate to their sorrows. A tender heart is like melting wax: ah, what choice impressions are made upon such dispositions!

A Christian should mourn more for the lusts of the flesh, than for the works of the flesh: for the sin of our nature transcends the nature of all our *outward* sins. *Carnal* sins defile the soul *by* the body; but *spiritual* sins defile the soul *in* the body. Many people can mourn over a body from which a soul is departed, but they cannot mourn over a soul whom God has deserted: alas! what is the bite of a fly, to the stinging of a scorpion? or a spot in the face, to a stab in the heart? Inward diseases are least *visible*, and yet most *fatal*. A man may die of the plague, although his spots never appear.

Sin in the soul, is like Jonah in the ship; it turns the smoothest water into a troubled ocean. We must mourn for sin on earth, or burn for sin in hell. It is the coldness of our hearts, which kindles the fire of God's anger. *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.*—Christians! the *nails* that pierced his *hands*, should now pierce your *hearts:* you should now be deeply wounded with godly sorrow, for having so deeply wounded him with your deadly sins. It should grieve your spirits, to remember how much you have grieved his Spirit.

A believer puts on the sackcloth of contrition, for having put off the garment of perfection. As the sugar-loaf is dissolved, and weeps itself away, when dipped in wine; so do our hearts melt under a sense of divine love. Our language at such

a season is, *O that we should be such base children to so blessed a Father!*

Man must be convinced of sin, before he can truly repent of sin: unbelief in the heart is like the worm in Jonah's gourd, an unseen adversary; it is least visible, but most hurtful. *Infidelity* is the worst of robbers; it both plunders and wounds the soul: Christ may dwell in the heart where it lurks, but not where it *reigns*. If Christ destroy its armour, it becomes weak as other men. Its chief strength wherein it trusteth, is ignorance; and no wonder why men *sigh* so little *for* sin, when they *see* so little *of* sin. They have tears enough for their outward losses, but none for their inward lusts: they can mourn for the evil which sin brings, but not for sin which brings the evil.

Pharaoh more lamented the hard strokes that were upon him, than the hard heart which was within him. Esau mourned not because he sold the birth-right, which was his sin; but because he lost the blessing, which was his punishment. This is like weeping with an onion; the eye sheds tears, because it smarts. A mariner casts overboard that cargo in a tempest, which he courts the return of when the winds are silenced. Many complain more of the sorrows to which they are born, than of the sins with which they were born: they tremble more at the vengeance of sin, than at the venom of sin; one delights them, the other affrights them.

The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Why, what is the matter? *Who amongst us shall dwell in everlasting*

burnings? They feared corruption, not as it was a coal that defiled, but as it was a fire that burned them. A stroke from justice brake the heart of Judas into despair; while a look from mercy melted Peter's heart into tears.

There are two things in our sins; the *devilishness* of them, and the *dangerousness* of them. Now take a saint and a sinner; the first says, 'What have I done?' the last says, 'What must I suffer?' One mourns for the active evil; the other for the passive evil. The former grieves because his soul is defiled; the latter, because his soul is condemned. Water may gush from a rock when it is smitten with a rod; but all such streams are lost; for they neither quench the flames of hell, nor fill God's bottles in heaven.

Our whole life should be a life of repentance; and such as needeth not to be repented of. While the vessel is leaking, the pump may be going. Reader, it is an unfavourable symptom, if you can wipe away tears from your eyes before God has washed away guilt from your conscience. Is it not better travelling to heaven *sadly*, than to hell *securely?* Give me a sorrowful saint, rather than a merry sinner.

Did the rocks rend when Christ died for sin? and shall not our hearts rend for having lived in sin? *If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin; and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Did ever words like these drop from the lips of any being, except God's? Here, the sinner is desired only to acknowledge the debt, and the bond shall be cancelled. Is it not there-

fore better to be saved by divine mercy, than to be sued by divine justice? As soon as we are oppressed, and groan under our own burdens, we are sure to be eased by Christ's shoulders. If we remember our offences with unfeigned grief, the offended Lord joyfully forgives and forgets them all.

Where misery passes undiscerned, there mercy passes undesired. Christ may knock long at such doors, before he gains admittance. He only enters into those, who enter into themselves. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock.* Christ oftener comes to the door, than he enters the house. As we knock at his door for audience, so he does at our's for entrance. If his person be shut out, our prayers will be shut out. Why should God shew him mercy, who never acknowledged himself guilty? A saint's tears are better than a sinner's triumphs. Bernard saith, *Lachrymæ pœnitentium sunt vinum angelorum.* 'The tears of penitents are the wine of angels.'

When a sinner repents, the angels rejoice: and give me such a mourning on earth, as creates music in heaven. Many are battered as lead by the hammer, who were never bettered as gold by the fire. Sometimes, that repentance which begins in the fears of hell, ends in the flames of hell.

9. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To keep his heart the lowest, when God raises his estates the highest.*

St. Paul saw the need of this, when he enjoined Timothy to charge those that were rich in this world not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches. Sinful arrogance usually attends creature

confidence. Worldly wealthiness is a quill to swell the bladder of high mindedness: for when men's estates are lifted up, it is but too common for men's hearts to be puffed up. Oh! how fond is thin dust of thick clay! Pride breeds in great estates, as worms do in sweet fruits.

Remember, Christian, if you be poor in the world, you should be rich in faith; and if you be rich in this world, you should be poor in spirit. The way to ascend, is to descend; the deeper a tree roots, the wider do its branches spread. The sun of prosperity shines the clearest in the sphere of humility. The true nobility of the mind consists in the humbleness of the mind. Consider, that as none have so little, but they have great cause to bless God; so none have so much, as to have the least cause to boast before God.

Shall the theatrical vagrant be proud of his borrowed robes, or the mud wall swell because the beams of a beautiful sun shine upon it? Gold in your bags may make you great; but it is grace in your hearts which makes you good. Goodness, without greatness, shall be esteemed; when greatness, without goodness, shall be confounded. Proud sinners are the fittest companions for proud devils. The more prosperity man enjoys, the more humility God enjoins.

Nature teaches us, that those trees bend the most freely, which bear the most fully. As a proud heart loves none but itself; so it is beloved by none but itself. Who would attempt to gain those pinnacles, that none have ascended without fears, or descended without falls? It is recorded of

Timotheus the Athenian, that when he was giving an account of his government and successes to the state, he frequently asserted with a vaunting air, 'in this fortune had no hand.' After this he never prospered, was quickly after disgraced, and died in exile. When men through daring pride cast off all allegiance to God, he in just derision casts them out from the inheritance of God. If we refuse to acknowledge him, he will refuse to acknowledge us.

It is reported of Philip of Macedon, that after having obtained the honour of an unexpected victory, he was observed to look very much dejected; on being asked the reason, he replied, 'that the honours which were obtained by the sword, might also be lost by the sword.' Was he pensive, when providence crowned him with victory? and shall we be vainly elated, when providence makes us wealthy? The Supreme Majesty cannot suffer us to glory in any but Himself; therefore, when we glory in our pride, he stains the pride of our glory. It is a difficult matter to be grand in the estimation of others, and base in our own. The face of no mere man ever shone so illustriously as that of the ancient Jewish lawgiver's; and yet it is affirmed that no man's heart was ever so meek: but most men resemble chameleons; which no sooner take in the air, than they begin to *swell.*

As that is a rebellious heart, in which sin is allowed to reign; so that is not a very enlarged heart, which the world can fill. Alas, what will it profit us to sail before the pleasing gales of prosperity, if we be afterwards overset by the gusts

of vanity? Your bags of gold should be ballast in your vessel to keep her always steady, instead of being topsails to your masts to make your vessel giddy. Give me that distinguished person, who is rather pressed down under the weight of all his honours, than puffed up with the blast thereof.

It has been observed by those who are experienced in the sport of angling, that the smallest fishes bite the fastest. Oh, how few *great men* do we find so much as *nibbling* at the gospel hook! *I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.* Mercy favoured them, but gratitude could not bind them.

When King James's tutor lay upon his expiring pillow, his Majesty sent to enquire how he did:—'Go tell,' saith he, 'my royal sovereign, that I am going where few kings go.' The tree of life is not often planted in a terrestrial paradise. Under the Levitical law, the *lamb* and the *dove* were offered in sacrifice, when the *lion* and the *eagle* were rejected. The shining diamond of a great estate, may frequently be found upon an unsound and idolatrous heart. Prosperity is not to be deemed the greatest security. The lofty unbending cedar is more exposed to the injurious blast, than the lowly shrub. The little pinnace rides safely along the shore, while the gallant ship advancing is wrecked. Those sheep which have the most wool, are generally the soonest fleeced. *Poverty* is its own defence against *robbery*. A fawning world

is worse than a frowning world. Who would shake those trees upon which there is no fruit?

Many think to be saved, because they are poor; and others, because they are rich; but these are all capitally mistaken; for numbers of the former are not saved, and not many of the latter will be saved. *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.* You nobles, I call you to see, that not many *nobles* are called. He does not say, not *any*, but not *many*. Blessed be God, we can say of them, as Luther once said of Elizabeth, a pious queen of Denmark, 'Christ will sometimes carry a queen to heaven.' Rich men are choice dishes at God's table.

Some people, when their estates are low, their hearts are high: but true believers, when their estates are high, their hearts are low. What an excellent commendation does the beloved Prophet of Israel give the beloved Prince of Israel: *Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* The weighty clusters of mercy completely bowed the branches of this royal vine. He does not contend with God for mercies denied; but he adores him for mercies granted. The eye of his humility views the grace of God, and then he is thankful: it also views the folly of his heart, and this makes him mournful.

Theodosius deemed it more honourable to be a member of the church, than a monarch of the world; and so did King David. Ah! what wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not? For every thing will come to nothing, but He who

formed all things out of nothing. Many think it must go well with them hereafter, because it is so well with them here: as if silver and gold, which came out of the bowels of the earth, would carry them to the bosom of the God of heaven. Though the gates of heaven will open to admit the heaven-born soul; yet they are not unlocked with a golden key. A man may bask in the beams of prosperity now, and yet burn in the flames of eternity with infidels hereafter.

The worm of pride is always injurious to celestial plants: either this vice must be shut out on earth, or we shall be shut out in heaven. The bowing reed of an humble mind shall be preserved entire; while the sturdy oak of a proud lofty mind shall be broken to shivers. A proud person thinks every thing too much that is done *by* him, and every thing too little that is done *for* him. God is as far from pleasing him with his gifts, as he is from pleasing God with his works. Remember what the observant prophet Habakkuk declares: *Behold, his soul which is lifted up in him is not upright.* Observe, he introduces the subject with a *Behold:* he that lifts up himself, is not lifted up of God. I will not say, a good man is never proud; but I will say, a proud man is never good.

10. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To seek to be better inwardly in his substance, than outwardly in appearance.*

This is a business which no hypocrite chooses to be employed in: he prefers varnish to massy gold. It little concerns him how much the house be infected with the leprosy, so it be but outwardly

fair to human inspection. He forgets that, *he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit.*

Formality frequently takes its dwelling near the chambers of integrity, and so assumes its name; the soul not suspecting that hell should make so near an approach to heaven. A rotten post, though covered with gold, is more fit to be burned in the fire, than for the building of a fabric. Where there is a pure conscience, there will be a pure conversation. The dial of our faces does not infallibly shew the time of day in our hearts. The humblest looks may enamel the former, while unbounded pride governs the latter. Unclean spirits may inhabit the chamber, when they look not out at the window.

An hypocrite may be both the fairest and the foulest creature in the world; he may be fairest outwardly in the eyes of man, and foulest inwardly in the sight of God. How commonly do such unclean swans cover their *black flesh* with their *white feathers!* Though such wear the mantle of Samuel, they should bear the name of Satan.

Many appear righteous, who are only righteous in appearance: but while they are deceiving others with the false shews of holiness, they are also deceiving themselves with the false hopes of happiness. The hypocrite would not willingly seem evil, and yet would inwardly be so; he would fain be accounted good, and yet would not be so. O man, either appear what you are, or be what you appear. What will the form of godliness do for

you, if you deny the power thereof? *Own this,* or God will *disown thee.* Those who have the power of godliness, cannot deny the form; while those who have the form, may deny the power.

Hypocrites resemble *looking-glasses,* which present the faces that are not in them. Oh, how desirous are men to put the fairest gloves upon the foulest hands; and the finest paint upon the rottenest posts! To counterfeit the coin of heaven, is to commit treason against the King of heaven. Who would spread a curious cloth upon a dusty table?

If a mariner set sail in an unsound bottom, he may reasonably expect to lose his voyage. No *wise virgin* would carry a lamp without light. O professor, either get the latter, or part with the former. None are so black in the eyes of the *Deity,* as those who paint for spirit spiritual beauty.

Some persons are better in show than in substance; but not so with true Christians: they are not like painted tombs, which inclose decayed bones. *The king's daughter is all glorious within.* She is all glorious within; though within is not all her glory. That is a sad charge, which the God of truth brings against certain false professors: *I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not; but are the synagogue of Satan.* A false friend is worse than an open enemy. A painted harlot is less dangerous than a painted hypocrite. A treacherous Judas is more abhorred of God than a bloody Pilate.

Christians! remember the sheep's cloathing will soon be stripped from the wolf's back. The velvet

plaster of profession shall not always conceal the offensive ulcer of corruption. Neither the ship of formality nor hypocrisy will carry one person to the harbour of felicity. The blazing lamps of foolish virgins may light them to the bridegroom's gate, but not into his chamber. Either get the nature of Christ within you, or take not the honours of Christians upon you.

Oh, what vanity is it to lop off the boughs, and leave the roots which can send forth more; or to empty the cistern, and leave the fountain running which can soon fill it again! Such may swim in the water as the visible church; but when the net is drawn to shore, they must be thrown away as bad fishes. Though the tares and the wheat may grow in the field together, yet they will not be housed in the granary together.

How pious and devout did the pharisees appear before men! They concluded them to be the only saints upon earth. They judged the inward man by the outward: but not so with the heart-searching God; for, *He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.* That sepulchre is not always the repository of gold, which is outwardly garnished. Herod was a God in the esteem of the people, when he was but a fiend in the sight of the Lord; they adored him, he destroyed him.

A man's conversation may be civilized, when his heart is not evangelized. There is as much difference between nature restrained and nature

renewed, as between the glimmering of a glow-worm and the splendour of the noonday sun. A bad man is certainly worst, when he is seemingly best. We must not account every one a soldier, who swaggers with a sword. A rusty scymitar may frequently be found in a highly-trimmed scabbard. What is it to have our hands as white as snow, if our hearts be as black as the bottomless pit? Such professors resemble curious bubbles, smooth and clear without, yet only filled with air.

A man may wear the Saviour's livery, and yet be busied in Satan's drudgery. The skin of an apple may be fair, when it is rotten at the core. Though all gold may glitter, yet all is not gold that glitters. The errantest hypocrite may have the colour of gold, but not the value of gold. What comparison is there between the gilt tun filled with air, and the homely vessel filled with generous wine?

Very few deceivers duly weigh that notable saying of the wise man: *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.* He that promises to cover the Christian's infirmities, threatens also to disclose the antichristian's impieties. Well would it be for such to remember that arch-traitor Judas, who purchased nothing by his deceitful dealings, but a halter for his body, in which he was *hanged;* and fire for his soul, in which he is *burning.*

11. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To be more afflicted at the distresses of the church, than affected at his own happiness.*

When we suffer not from the enemies of Christ

by *persecution*, we should then suffer for the friends of Christ by *compassion*. Let not Sion's sons be rejoicing, while their mother is mourning: *Are not her breaches like the sea, and there is none to heal her?* If her breaches be irreparable, our hearts should be inconsolable. It is observed of doves, that if one be sick, the other laments: yea, the savage beasts will mourn over the afflicted creatures of their own species: and shall that be *lost* among *men*, which is *found* among *beasts?*

Christianity never was designed to strip men of *humanity*. Reader, can you see the church bleeding, and never ask balm for her wounds? How can you rejoice when she stands, if you do not mourn when she falls? It rejoiced impious Nero to *see* the Christians burning; but it should wound us to *hear* of it. The cruel massacre of the *Judean infants* was a pleasant sight to bloody Herod.

We may justly prefer that charge against many *nominal* Christians, which God did against *nominal* Israel: *They drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointment; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.*

Many can weep a flood for the groans of a child; but they cannot drop a tear for the groans of the church. Their love to relations transcends their love to religion. He that has property on board the church's ship, cannot but be alarmed at every storm. I conclude that to be a *silver* eye in the spiritual head, and a *wooden* leg in the spiritual body, that is insensible to all its sorrows. That man who has no compassion for afflicted Christians, may rest persuaded that God will have no

compassion on him. His language will be, *Depart, ye cursed: for I was hungry, and ye fed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.*

The enemies of the church may toss her as waves; but they shall not split her as rocks. She may be dipped in water as a *feather;* but shall not sink therein as *lead.* He that is a well of water within her, to keep her from fainting, will also prove a wall of fire about her, to preserve her from falling. *Tried* she may be; but *destroyed* she cannot be. Her foundation is the Rock of Ages, and her defence the everlasting Arms. It is only such fabrics as are bottomed upon the *sand,* that are overthrown by the *wind.* The adversaries of God's people will push at them as far as their horns will go; but when they have scoured them by prosecution as tarnished vessels, then God will throw such whisps into the fire.

Many would rather see the church's *expiration,* than her reformation: it would afford them more pleasure to find her nullified, than purified; for they suppose that *happiness increases,* in proportion as *holiness decreases.* Christian! when persecutors make long furrows upon the saint's back, then we should cast in the seed of sympathetic tears. Saul made the Saviour feel, before he opened his commission to apprehend his members at Damascus. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Thus the head cries out in heaven, while the toe is trod upon on earth.

Though Jesus Christ has altered his condition, yet he hath not changed his affection. Death took away his life *for* us; but not his love *from* us.

He that washed away the blood of guilt from our hearts, will soon wipe away those briny tears that disfigure our cheeks. He who paid so great a price for our redemption, will not resign us into the hands of our cruel tormentors. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.* If the Father of mercies thus proclaim pardon to returning *prodigals,* we may expect soon to hear of music and rejoicing among all the heavenly harpers.

When we see the church pledging her beloved in the cup of affliction, we should then drink to her in the cup of consolation. A heavy burden may easily be borne by the assistance of many shoulders. Some are like Gallio; they care for none of those things; nay, when they should be sympathizers, they are censurers. They conclude that the gold is not good, because it is tried; and that the ground is naught, because it is ploughed. They wound those with the arrows of reproach, whom God has only corrected with the rod of reproof.

It is dangerous to smite those with our *tongues,* whom God has smitten with his *hand.* His right to correct is not our's. Because Christ suffered for transgressors, many numbered him *with* transgressors: but that was to give him the sharpest vinegar, when they should have given him the sweetest wine. *Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.* Why, David? *For they persecute them whom thou*

hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

Sympathy is a debt we owe to sufferers. For Christians to be rejoicing when their brethren are weeping, is like putting *silver-lace* upon a *mourning suit.* Our own particular losses and distresses resemble the extinguishing of a candle, which only occasions darkness in one room: but the general distresses of the church are like the eclipsing of the sun, which overshadows the whole hemisphere. Pliny informs us of two goats meeting together on a narrow bridge, where neither of them could either proceed or recede; at last one of them lay down, that the other might go over him. How much of the man was there in those beasts; and how much of the beast is there in some men!

It is certainly better to be in the humble posture of a mourner, than in the proud gesture of a scorner. The woman of Canaan could not rest, while her daughter was restless: the torture of one, was the torment of the other: but a word from Jesus relieved them both. Sympathy renders a doleful state more joyful. Alexander refused water in a time of great scarcity, because there was not enough for his whole army.

It should be among Christians, as among lute-strings, when one is touched the others tremble. Believers should be neither *proud flesh,* nor *dead flesh.* Fellow members should ever have fellow feelings. Other men's woes are our warnings:—their desolation should be our information.

Jeremiah suffered not in his own person, being under the protection of the Divine Being: but

though he dwelt securely from the hand of mortality, yet he was filled with the bowels of sympathy. Though he wrote of the *Jews' desolations*, yet he named them *Jeremiah's Lamentations*.

12. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To render the greatest good for the greatest evil.*

Mariners look for a storm at sea, when the waters begin to utter a murmuring noise. Theodosius the emperor, being urged to execute one who had reviled him, answered, 'So far from gratifying your wish; were it in my power, if he were dead, I would raise him to life again; rather than, being alive, to put him to death.'

He makes a good market of bad commodities, who with kindnesses overcomes injuries. For a man to conquer another's person, and be captivated by his own passions, is but to lose the *palace* of a *prince* to gain the *cottage* of a *peasant*. A spark of fire falling in the ocean, expires immediately: but dropping upon combustibles, burns furiously. God has bound every believer in gospel cords to his good behaviour.

A carnal man may love his friends, but it is a Christian man that loves his enemies. *But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.* He calls to *patience*, who is *patience itself;* and he that gives the precept, enforces it by his own example. It is unnatural to hate them that love us: and it is supernatural to love them that hate us. A sinner can do much evil, but he can suffer none; a saint can suffer much evil, but he will do none.

He that takes up fire to throw at his adversaries, is in great danger of burning his own fingers. A gun ill charged, instead of hitting the mark, does but recoil on him that discharges it. He who glories in wounding others, will finally wound himself. If injuries be our enemies' weapons, forgiveness should be ours. How many have had their blood seen, because they would not have their backs seen. Men's actions towards others, are generally excused by others' actions towards them. There is a two-fold frenzy; that of the head, which deprives men of prudence; and that of the heart, which deprives them of their patience. To forget an injury, is more than nature can promise; but to forgive it, is what grace can perform. Patience affords us a shield to defend ourselves; but innocence denies us a sword to offend others. If ever you hope that your charity should live after you, then let resentment die before you.

It is written in the law of Mahomet, that God made *angels* of light, and *devils* of flame. Sure I am, that they are of hellish constitutions, who play off the *fire-works* of contention. *Be ye angry, and sin not. Anger* should not be a burning coal from *Satan's furnace;* but a blazing coal from *God's altar.* It should resemble fire in straw; which is as easily quenched, as suddenly kindled. He that would be angry and not sin, must be angry at nothing but sin. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil.* He that carries passions to bed with him, will find the devil creep between the sheets: and why should we give place to him, who crowds in so fast himself?

O man, shall thy *life* be *mortal,* and thy *wrath*

immortal? Should we not give place to an offending brother, rather than to a designing murderer? How many are there who profess to *forgive,* but cannot *forget,* an injury! Such are like persons who sweep the chamber, but leave the dust behind the door. Whenever we grant our offending brethren a discharge, our hearts also should set their hands to the acquittance.

We should not only break the teeth of malice by *forgiveness,* but pluck out its sting by *forgetfulness.* To store our memories with a sense of injuries, is to fill that chest with rusty iron, which was made for refined gold. The pot of malice should not stand upon the fire till it boils over. Christian, can you expect better treatment in the world, than he who was better than the world?

When Aristides, the Athenian general, sat to arbitrate a difference between two persons, one of them said, 'This fellow accused thee at such a time.' To whom Aristides answered, 'I sit, not to hear what he has done against me, but against thee.' How should a Christian shine, if an heathen give such light! *If therefore thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.* Not the coals of vengeance to *consume* him, but the coals of kindness to *soften* him.

Jesus was an intercessor both in his life and death; his dying breath was praying breath, and that not only for his *sorrowful disciples,* but for his *enraged murderers* also. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Thus he gave them the best wine for the bitterest gall. The Lord Jesus spreads a large table every day, and

the major part who feed thereat are his enemies. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.* The Lord Jesus can both tame the most cruel beast, and quench the most raging lust.

None but a patient Christ can make us patient Christians. As our passions were the *cause* of his, so his passion is the *cure* of ours. Reader, if you cannot forgive others, God will not forgive you. You have his own authority for this: *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.* In vain do we ask God to be pacified to us, while we live at variance with others. How can we expect to have pounds remitted to us, if pence are not remitted by us?

I have read of a person who imbrued his hands in his own blood, because they were too short to reach his enemy's. Poor revenge! How repugnant was this to the apostolic advice: *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.* This was the conduct of dying Stephen: *And he kneeled down and prayed with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Could living men do worse to a dying man, or a dying man pray better for living men?

To do evil for good, is human corruption; to do good for good, is civil retribution; but to do good for evil, is Christian perfection. Though this be not the grace of nature, yet it is the nature of grace.

When Shimei cursed David in his distress, Abishai was for an immediate retaliation. *Shall I take off the head of this dead dog; for why should he curse my Lord the King?* What was David's answer? *So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.* He was so far from taking off his head, that he does not even attempt to shut his mouth. The shoulders of charity are able to carry the burden of injury, without either being moved with violence, or removed from patience.

Though God suffer not his people to sin in avenging their enemies, yet he suffers not the sin of their enemies to go unavenged. *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.* 'Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.' Where there is the most indignation, there is the least discretion. No men do more readily brook insults from others, than such as have learned to despise themselves. Make not an enemy of your friend, by returning evil for good; but make a friend of your enemy, by returning him good for evil.

12. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To take those reproofs best which he needs most.*

It was the saying of an heathen, though no heathenish saying, 'That he who would be good, must either have a faithful friend to instruct him, or a watchful enemy to correct him.' Should we murder a physician, because he comes to cure us; or like him worse, because he would make us better?

The flaming sword of *reprehension* is but to keep us from the forbidden fruit of *transgression. Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness;*

and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. Let him smite me as with a *hammer,* for so the word signifies. A Boanerges is as necessary as a Barnabas.

Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? Truth is not always relished, where sin is nourished. Light is pleasant; yet it may be offensive to sore eyes. Honey is sweet, though it cause the wound to smart: but we must not neglect the actions of friends, for fear of drawing upon ourselves the suspicions of being enemies. It is better to lose the smiles of men, than the souls of men. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, nor suffer sin to lie upon him.* He who loves a garment, hates the moths which fret it.

Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee; but rebuke a scorner, and he will hate thee. Reproof slides from a scorner's breast, as water from an oiled post. Instead of loving a man amidst all his injuries, he will hate him for all his civilities. Most people are like restive horses, which no sooner feel the rowel, than they strike with their heels; or like bees, which no sooner are angered, than they put out their stings.

There is much discretion to be observed in reprehension: a *word* will do more with some, than a *blow* with others. A Venice glass is not to be rubbed so hard as a brazen kettle. The tender reed is more easily bowed than the sturdy oak. Christ's warfare requires no carnal weapons. Dashing storms do but destroy the seed, while gentle showers nourish it. Chariots too furiously driven, may be overturned by their own violence.

How many are there, who check passion with passion; and are very angry in reproving anger! Thus, to lay *one devil*, they raise *another*; and leave more work to be undone, than they found to be done. Such a reproof of vice, is a vice to be reproved. In reprehension, we should always beware of carrying our teeth in our tongues; and of biting while we are speaking. A surgeon would not be justifiable in dismembering a body, if he could effect a cure without it.

Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, you that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. The word signifies, to set him in joint again; and to set a dislocated bone, requires the lady's hand; tenderness, as well as skilfulness. Reprehension is not an act of *butchery*, but an act of *surgery*. Take heed of blunting the instrument, by putting too keen an edge upon it. Mark the reason which the apostle assigns for gentle reproof: *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

If thy neighbour's house be on fire, thine own may be in danger. We should be willing to lend mercy at one time, as we may have occasion to borrow it at another. We should do with other's sins, as we do with our own sores; which, if a gentle scar will produce a sufficient discharge, we avoid cutting and slashing. If ravenous birds can be frayed away by a look, we need not expend powder and shot.

It is true, open sinners deserve open censures; but private admonitions will best suit private offences. While we seek to heal a wound in our

brother's actions, we should be careful not to leave a scar upon his person. We give grains of allowance in all current coin. That is a choice friend, who conceals our faults from the view of others, and yet discovers them to our own. That *medicine* which rouses the evil humours of the body, and does not carry them off, only leaves it in a worse condition than it found it.

It must be lamented, that many are as lost to the softest tongue of reproof, as the *deaf adder* is to the sweet voice of the *charmer:* they are always administering the bitter pills of *calumny*, for the sweet cordials of *charity*. Men love to be adored, yet hate to be reproved. But how can we praise what they do, when they are so far from doing what is worthy to be praised?

How securely would David have slept, if Nathan had not been sent to rouse him! How far do many travel in the downward road, for want of a wholesome friend to stop them in their journey! Private admonition is rather a proof of *benevolence*, than of *malevolence*. It was the saying of Austin, when his hearers resented his frequent reproofs, 'Change your conduct, and I will change my conversation.' The more a serpent is stirred, the more he gathers up his poison.

Some are to reproof, as tygers are to drums; because they cannot stop *them*, they will tear their *own flesh*. Man is a cross creature, and cannot endure to be checked; he would have a *Touch me not*, written upon himself: but who would chide the dog for barking, when the thief is approaching?—Sin is like a *nettle*, which stings when it is

gently touched, but hurts not when it is *roughly* handled. Beloved, this rough hewing of reproof is but to square us for the celestial building. As for flatterers, they may be named the *devil's upholsterers;* who no sooner see men troubled at their lusts, than they are for laying pillows under their elbows: but let such know, that their want of the fire of *zeal* will be punished with the fire of *hell.* He is an unskilful limner, who paints deformities in the fairest of colours.

Reprehension should tread upon the heels of transgression. The plaster should be applied as soon as the wound is received. It is easier to extinguish a *flaming torch,* than a burning house. Gentle medicine will serve for a recent distemper, but *chronical* diseases require powerful recipes.

The sword of reproof should be drawn against the offence, and not against the offender. Man thinks this cup is not sufficiently bitter, except he mingle it with his wormwood and gall. *But the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* The severest sentences of the church are not *mortal,* but *medicinal.* They are to raise the dead to life, and not to put the living to death.

Who knows how much the majesty of a reprover may tame the insolence of an offender? *He that hates reproof is brutish.* He is brutish, like an angry dog, that snarles and bites while the festering thorn is being taken out of his foot; or like a vicious horse, that strikes the groom while he is rubbing off the dirt.

If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if

he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. The *spaniel* loses the prey, by barking at the game. The presence of a multitude makes a man take up an unjust defence, rather than lie down under a just shame. It is better to censure a man in private, than to spread his guilt by proclamation. How many do that in the market, which they should do in the closet! Sin is a miry depth; if we attempt to help others out, and do not, we sink them the deeper. Remember, tender lambs, though straying, must be gently reduced to the fold.

14. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To take up every duty in point of performance, and lay it down in point of dependance.*

When the purest *duties* have been *performed*, the purest *mercies* should be *implored*. Many have passed the rocks of *gross sins*, who have suffered shipwreck upon the sands of *self-righteousness*. Some people live more upon their *customs*, than they do upon Christ; more upon the prayers they make to God, than upon the God to whom they make their prayers. This is, for the redeemed captive to reverence the sword, instead of the hand which wrought his rescue.

The *Name* of God with a sling and a stone, will do more than Goliah with all his armour. Duties are but dry pits, though never so curiously wrought, till Christ fill them. Reader, I would neither have you be *idle* in the means, nor make an *idol* of the means. Though it be the mariner's duty to weigh his anchor, and spread his sails; yet he cannot make his voyage until the winds blow. The pipes will yield no conveyance, unless the springs yield their concurrence.

What is *hearing* without Christ, but like a cabinet without a jewel? or what is *receiving* without Christ, but like a glass without a cordial? We can only ascend to heaven upon that ladder which was let down from heaven. The most diligent saint has been the most self-diffident saint. *And be found in him, not having on my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith.* If you be found in your own righteousness, you will be lost by your own righteousness. That garment which was worn to shreds on Adam's back, will never make a complete covering for mine.

Duties may be good *crutches* to go upon, but they are bad *Christs* to lean upon. When Agustus Cæsar desired the senate to join some person with him in the consulship, they replied, 'They held it as a great dishonour to him to have any one joined with him, who was so capable himself.' It is the greatest disparagement that Christians can offer to Christ, to put their services in equipage with his sufferings. The beggarly rags of the *first Adam,* must never be put on with the princely robe of the *second Adam.*

Man is a creature too much inclined to warm himself by the sparks of his own fire, though he lie down in eternal flames for kindling them. Though Noah's dove made use of her *wings,* yet she found no rest but in the *ark.* Duties can never have too much of our diligence, or too little of our confidence. *For he that is entered into rest, hath ceased from his own works, as God*

did from his. A believer doth not perform good works to live, but he lives to perform good works.

It was an haughty saying of one, *Cœlum gratis non accipiam:* 'I will not accept of heaven gratis.' But he shall have hell as a *debt,* who will not take heaven as a *gift. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* A true Christian stands at a great distance from trusting in the best of his services, as in the worst of his sins. He knows that the greatest part of his holiness will not make the least part of his justifying righteousness. He has unreservedly subscribed to that sentiment, 'That when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants.'

When we have kept *all* the commandments, there is *one* commandment above all to be kept; that is, *To trust not in an arm of flesh.* In most of our works we are abominable sinners, and in the best of our works we are unprofitable servants. Our doings are not like the crystal streams of a living fountain, but like the impure overflowings of an unruly torrent. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* You see, beloved, the righteousness of Christ is to be magnified, when the righteousness of a Christian is not to be mentioned.

It is hard for us to be nothing in ourselves, amidst all our watchfulness; and to be all things in Christ, amidst all our weakness. To undertake every duty, and yet to overlook every duty, is a lesson which none can learn, but Christ's scholars.

Our obedience, at best, is like good wine, which relishes of a bad cask. The law of God will not take *ninety-nine* for an *hundred*. It will not accept the coin of our obedience, either short in quantity, or base in quality. The duty it exacts, is as impossible to be performed in this our fallen state, as the penalty it inflicts is intolerable to be endured in our eternal state.

We do not sail to glory in the salt sea of our own tears, but in the red sea of a Redeemer's blood. *Crux Christi est clavis paradisi.* 'The cross of Christ is the key of paradise.' We owe the life of our souls to the death of our Saviour. It was his going into the furnace which keeps us from the flames. Man lives by death; his natural life is preserved by the death of the creature, and his spiritual life by the death of the Redeemer.

Moses must lead the children of Israel through the *wilderness*, but Joshua must conduct them into *Canaan*. While we are in the wilderness of this world, we walk under the guidance of Moses; but when we enter the spiritual Canaan, it must be under the leadings of Jesus. The same hand which shut the doors of hell, to keep us out of perdition; has opened the gates of heaven, to admit us to its eternal fruition.

Those who carry the vessel of hope to the puddle of their own merit, will never draw the water of comfort from the fountain of God's mercy. Luther compares the law and gospel to *earth* and *heaven*; we should walk in the earth of the law, in point of obeying, and in the heaven of the gospel, in point of believing. It was the saying of one, 'That he would swim through a sea of brim-

stone, so he might but arrive safe at heaven.' Ah, how would natural men sing, if they could but soar to heaven upon the pinions of their own merit! The sun-beams of justice will soon melt such weak and waxen wings.

He that has no better righteousness than what is of his own providing, shall meet with no higher happiness than what is of his own deserving. *For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.* If such people rest not *from* duty, then they rest *in* duty. They are *determined* to sail in their own bottom, though they sink in the ocean. I would that all such did but know, that though good works are not *destroyed* by Christ, yet they must be *denied* for Christ.

When a glass reflects the brightness of the sun, there is but an acknowledgement of what was, not an addition of what was not. A curious picture praises a beautiful face; not by communicating what it wants, but by presenting what it enjoys. As God has none the less, for the mercy he gives, so he has none the more, for the duty he receives. Man is such a debtor to God, that he can never pay his due to God; yea, the more we pay him, the more we owe him for our payments.

It is Christ only, who is the righteousness of God to man, and man to God. We are so far from paying the utmost farthing, that at the utmost we have not a farthing to pay. That man will be a miserable spectacle of vanity, who stands upon the lame feet of his own ability.

15. Another singular action of a sanctified Chris-

tian, is, *To take up his atonement in God's appointment.*

As many do the things which God dislikes, so they dislike the things which God does. If the children of Israel obtain no meat for their lusts, then they are weary of their lives. They are delighted with their burning corruptions, but are enraged with their trying conditions; which is nothing less than to be in love with their malady, and out of love with their remedy. They studied more how to gratify their humour, than to satisfy their hunger. They complained of the shoe, but the disease lay in the foot.

Those who think too highly of their own deserts, will think too meanly of their estates. It is even the task of God, to satisfy the desires of men. He can do every thing, but they are not pleased with any thing.

There is no man but what has received more good than he has deserved, and done more evil than has been inflicted: he should therefore be contented, though he see but little good; and not discontented, though he suffer much evil. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* Where the seal of faith hath been set to the bond of truth, he who hath said it will maintain thee in the want of maintenance.

When a wicked man's purse grows light, his heart grows heavy. When he has something without to afflict him, he has nothing within to support him. That well-known scripture is unknown to him: *I know how to be abased, and how*

to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. It is hard to carry a full cup without shedding; or to stand under a heavy load without bowing. It is difficult to walk in the clear day of prosperity, without wandering; or in the dark night of adversity, without stumbling: but from whatever point the wind blows, the skilful mariner knows how to meet it with his sails.

Repenting is the act of *Christian* men, but *repining* is the act of *carnal* men. Though their estates be like a fruitful paradise, yet their hearts are like a barren wilderness. Such people are like *spiders*, which suck poison out of the sweetest flowers, and by an infernal *chemistry* extract dross from the purest gold.

Outward prosperity cannot create inward tranquillity. *Heart's-ease* is a flower that never grew in the world's garden. The ground of a wicked man's trouble is not because he has not enough *of* the creature, but because he cannot find enough *in* the creature. His possession is *great* enough, but his disposition is not *good* enough. Some are *satisfied* under the hand of God, because they are not *sensible* of the hand of God. They never *fret*, because they never *feel*.

We are not to be troubled that we have no more *from* God, but we are to be troubled that we do no more *for* God. Christians, if the Lord be well pleased with your persons, should not you be well pleased with your conditions? There is more reason that you should be pleased with them, than that he should be pleased with you. Believers

should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied at the pleasure of their owner. He that sails upon the sea of this world in his own bottom, will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers, but they were sure to cut their own fingers.

A covetous man is fretful, because he has not so much as he desires; but a gracious man is thankful, because he has more than he deserves. It is true, I have not the sauce; but then I merit not the meat. I have not the lace; but then I deserve not the coat. I want that which may support my dignity; but I have that which supplies my necessity. *Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.*—*Here* is the *flesh* of the creature to *fill* us, and the *fleece* of the creature to *cover* us.

It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, 'Which God pleases.' But, said one, if God should refer it to you, which would you choose? 'Truly,' replied she, 'I would refer it to him again.' Thus, that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God.

A contented heart is an even sea in the midst of all storms. It is like a tree in autumn, which secures its life, when it has lost its leaves. When worthy Mr. Hern lay upon his death-bed, his wife, with great concern, asked him what was to become of her and her large family? he answered, 'Peace, sweet heart; that God who feeds the ravens, will not starve the Herns.' If the child be jealous of

his father's affection, he will soon be dubious of his father's provision.

Our most golden conditions in this life are set in brazen frames. There is no gathering a rose without a thorn, till we come to Immanuel's land. If there were nothing but showers, we should conclude the world would be drowned; if nothing but sunshine, we should fear the earth would be burned. Our worldly comforts would be a sea to drown us, if our crosses were not a plank to save us. By the fairest gales, a sinner may sail to destruction; and by the fiercest winds, a saint may sail to glory. When our circumstances become necessitous, our corruptions become impetuous; they rage the more, because stopped by the dam of poverty. If God withhold the hand of providence, we employ the tongue of insolence. We too frequently bite at the stone, till we break our teeth. We murmur because we are in want, and therefore want because we murmur.

A skilful pilot knows what winds tend to blow us into our harbour. An unquiet mind makes but a slow recovery. Contentment is the best food to preserve a sound man, and the best medicine to restore a sick man. It resembles the gilt on nauseous pills, which makes a man take them without tasting their bitterness. Contentment will make a cottage look as fair as a palace. He is not a poor man that hath but little, but he is a poor man that wants much. In this sense, the poorest are often the richest, and the richest the poorest.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. This is

too precious a seed to grow in every soil. Though every godly man may not always be contented, yet every truly contented man is godly. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.* Such a scripture will bring us plenty in scarcity—fulness out of emptiness. The water in a cloud soon ceases, but the water of a fountain continues.

As Seneca said to Polybius, 'Never complain of thy hard fortune so long as Cæsar is thy friend;' so say I to thee, never complain of thy hard fortune, Christian, so long as Jesus is thy friend.

Let your condition be never so flourishing, it is a hell without him; let it be never so fluctuating, it is a heaven with him. Can that man want any thing who enjoys Christ? or can he be said to enjoy any thing who is without Christ? Why should Hagar lament the loss of the water in her bottle, while there is a well so near?

16. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To be more in love with the employment of holiness, than with the enjoyment of happiness.*

Thousands of professors prize the wages of religion above its works; but a Christian will prize its works above its wages. Give me that singular preacher, who prefers his *labour* to his *lucre;* and the flock he attends, to the fleece he obtains.

Some men serve God, that they may serve themselves upon God. He loves not religion *sincerely,* who does not love it *superlatively.*

Israel is an empty vine; he brings forth unto himself. Empty, and yet fruitful; fruitful, and yet empty. Thus that fertility which springs up from the bitter roots of *self,* has nothing but vacuity in the account of God.

Such professors do not make gain stoop to godliness, but godliness to gain; which is, as if a man should fit his foot to the shoe, when he should fit the shoe to his foot.

That tradesman is poor and needy, who must have ready money for all he sells. In all the good a carnal man doth for God, he seeks himself more than God. The clock of his heart will stand still, unless its wheels of profit be oiled.

If the virgin should only give her hand in matrimony for her bridegroom's riches, she would not espouse herself unto his *person*, but unto his *portion*. This were not properly to make a *marriage with* him, but a *merchandize of* him. Saint Austin hath an excellent saying: 'He loves not Christ at all, who does not love Christ above all.'

Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Christ was the object of their actions, but self was the end of their actions. They came to Christ to serve their own turns; and when their turns were served, they then turned away their service. They were *cupboard* disciples—more than *men* at their *meat*, but less than *women* at their *work*. When the loaves were gone, the disciples were gone; when he left off feeding them, they left off following him.

Reader, till you can love the naked truth, you will never love to go naked for the truth. Most persons are *mercenary* in those works, wherein they should be *filial* and free. They look more after the streams, than upon the spring from whence they constantly run; and admire the beams more than the sun from whence they are

emitted. The want of pardon, is the only spring of a servile man's duty; he plies his prayers, as sailors do their pumps, only in a storm, or when fearful of sinking.

And now, O Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. Christ prayed for glory, more for the Father's sake, who bestowed it, than for his own sake, who received it. A true Christian not only desires grace that God may *glorify him,* but that *he* also may *glorify* God.

Could many men find the mercies of God, they would never seek the God of mercies. Could they tell how to be well without him, they would never desire to come to him. God hath but little of their society, except when they can find no other company.

Worldlings, instead of looking upon godliness as their greatest gain, will look upon gain as their greatest godliness. They love religion, not for the beauty existing in it, but for the dowry annexed to it. They are like the fox, that follows the lion for the prey that is falling from him. If there be no honey in the pot, such wasps will hover no longer about it.

Mark how the long-suffering God expostulates with self-seeking Israel: *When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?* In fasting and in feasting, their eyes were not cast upon God, but upon themselves. They forgat not to eat when they were hungry, but they forgat to

praise God when they were full. Their *greediness* swallowed up all their *thankfulness*.

Reader, remember that God will shut your duties out of heaven, if they shut him out on earth. I have heard a pleasing account of a woman, who being met with fire in one hand and water in the other, was asked what she was going to do with them; she answered, "With this fire I am going to burn up all the joys of heaven; and with this water I am going to quench all the flames of hell; that my services to my God might neither arise from the fear of punishment, nor hope of reward."

The less *emphasis* you lay upon *your own* works, the more will God lay upon them. Those who are most righteous in themselves, are least righteous to God. God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are *slaves*, and serve him from a principle of fear; others are *hirelings*, and serve him for the sake of wages; and the last are *sons*, and serve him under the influence of love.

Now a hireling will be a changeling. He that will not serve God except something be given him, would serve the devil, if he would give him more. Any one shall have his works, who will but augment his wages.

He had respect to the recompense of reward. This might be a good glass to look through, but it is a bad object to look to. The *poets* report, that many who at first paid their suits to the famous Penelope, were afterwards married to the maidens who attended her. The ass which carried the Egyptian goddess, had many bare heads and bended knees before it; but they were all to the *burden*, and

none to the beast. Thus many are advocates for the enjoyment of happiness, and enemies to the employment of holiness.

Demetrius cries up the goddess Diana; yet it was not her temple, but her *silver shrines*, he so much adored. He was more in love with her wealth, than with her worship. 'Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.' If her temple had been *demolished*, their trade would have been *diminished*. *Doth Job serve God for naught?* Yes, for Job served God when he had naught. He was as religious in his *poverty* as in his *plenty*. In this sense, that man who will not serve God for nothing, is nothing in his services.

Love trades not for home returns, it amply pays itself in serving its beloved. It is reported of one, who, being asked for whom he laboured *most*, he answered, 'For my friends.' And being asked again for whom he laboured *least*, he answered, 'For my friends.' Love doth most, and yet thinks least of what it does.

Hypocrites are more in love with the *gold* of the altar, than with the *God* of the altar. *Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.* They painted their avarice in religious colours, and put the arms of Christ upon the devil; that iniquity might by that means be esteemed under the garb of religion. They fasted all the day, that they might feed upon the widows' houses at night. They hatched the birds of *oppression* in the nests of *devotion*. These spiders weaved the

web of their own works, to catch the flies of other men's wealth.

The observation of Augustine is founded on too much truth: 'There is often a vast difference between the face of the work, and the heart of the workman.' But a man influenced by the Lord in his services, though he may find self in them as an *intruder*, yet he cannot suffer self in them as a *leader*.

A Christian is more in love with his present duty, than he is with his future glory. St. Paul was contented to stay a while out of heaven, that he might be the instrument of bringing other souls into heaven. *To me, to live, is Christ, and to die, is gain.* His life to them was most useful, but his death to himself was most profitable. By dying, he might have enjoyed his inheritance sooner; but by living, God made his usefulness greater.

Were it possible to put those things asunder which God himself hath joined together, a Christian would rather be holy without any happiness, than happy without any holiness.

Luther had this expression: 'I had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without Christ.' Indeed, hell itself would be a heaven, if God were in it; and heaven would be a hell, if God were from it. These are hard sayings to an uncircumcised ear; but the real choice of every renewed heart.

A gracious man makes this request for his soul: 'Lord, let me rather have a gracious heart, than a great estate; let me rather be pious without prosperity, than prosperous without piety.' Though he may love many things *beside* religion, yet he would not love any thing *above* religion.

The earth is our work-house; but heaven is our

store-house. This is a place to *run* in, and that is a place to *rest* in.

17. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To be more employed in searching his own heart, than he is in censuring other men's states.*

Those bishops are too busily employed, who lord it over another man's diocese. We are to allow believers for their failings, though we are not to allow them in their failings. *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.* It is a matter of greater moment to know the state of our *hearts,* than the state of our *flocks.*

Censorious men commonly take up magnifying glasses, to look at other person's imperfections; and diminishing glasses, to look at their own enormities.

Plato entertaining a few friends at an elegantly spread table, Diogenes, a famous cynic philosopher, coming in at the same time, trampled upon it, saying, 'I trample upon the pride of Plato!' To whom Plato immediately replied, 'Yea, but with greater pride in Diogenes.'

They are fittest to find fault, in whom there is no fault to be found. There is no removing blots from the paper, by laying upon them a blurred finger. *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* Reader, what do you get by throwing stones at your enemy's windows, while your own children look out at the casements? He that blows into a heap of dust, is in danger of putting out his own eyes.

Reader, are there not the same lusts lodging in

your heart, that are reigning in other men's lives? The reason why there is so little self-condemnation, is because there is so little self-examination. For want of this, many persons are like travellers, skilled in other countries, but ignorant of their own.

As it is an evidence that those tradesmen are embarrassed in their estates, who are afraid to look into their books; so it is plain that there is something wrong within, among all those who are afraid to look within. The trial of ourselves, is the ready road to the knowledge of ourselves. He that buys a jewel in a case, deserves to be cozened with a Bristol stone.

Reader, would you see God? then cast your eyes upwards: would you see yourself? then cast your eyes inward. *Contemplation* is a perspective glass to see our Saviour in; but *examination* is a looking-glass to view ourselves in. Are we then in the narrow way that leads to life, or in the broad way that leads to death? are we Christ's bride, or Satan's harlots? are our spirits chairs for vice to sit in, or thrones for grace to rule in?

Nero thought no person chaste, because he was so unchaste himself. Such as are troubled with the *jaundice*, see all things *yellow*. Those who are most religious, are least censorious. *Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant?* Those who are fellow-creatures with men, should not be fellow-judges with God.

Reader, why will you search another man's wound, while your own is bleeding? Take heed that your own vesture be not full of dust, when you are brushing your neighbour's. Complain not

of dirty streets, when heaps lie at your own doors. Many people are no longer well, than while they are holding their fingers upon another person's sores: such are no better in their conduct than crows, which prey only upon carrion. *But let every man prove his own work; and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

For want of self-examination, men have their accounts to cast up, when they should have them to deliver up. They have their evidences of grace to seek, when they should have them to shew. They lie down with such hopes in their beds of *rest*, with which they dare not lie down in their bed of *dust*. Conversion begins in consideration. The hasty shower falls fastest, but the soft snow sinks the deepest.

As that mariner who is inattentive to his *helm* is in danger of wrecking his vessel; so he who knows not himself, is likely to lose himself. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.* If your heart be not the cabinet of such a jewel, your head will never be graced with a diadem in glory.

If you must needs be a judge, then pray sit upon *your own* bench. I shall ever esteem such to be but religious lepers, who care not for scripture looking-glasses. He that never cries out, *Woe is me, for I am undone;* will never hear Christ say, *Go in peace.* Self-examination is the beating path to perfection; it is like fire, which not only tries the gold, but purifies it also.

The heathens tell us, that *nosce teipsum* (know thyself) was an oracle that came down from heaven. Sure I am, it is this oracle, that will lead us

to the God of heaven. The sight of *yourself* in *grace,* will bring you to the sight of *God* in *glory.* The plague of the body is not every man's plague, but the plague of the soul is. If the latter were known more, the former would be feared less: though there may be a more *pleasant,* yet there is not a more *profitable* sight. Till you know how deep the pit is into which you are fallen, you will never properly praise that hand which raises you out of it.

The bottom of our diseases lies in not searching our diseases to the bottom. So we have but some rags to cover our nakedness, we then wickedly despise the Saviour's righteousness.

He that trusts his own heart, is a fool: and yet such fools are we, as to trust our own hearts. The Lord searches all hearts by his *omnisciency;* but he searches his people's hearts by the eye of his *mercy.* If a man would know whether the sun shines, it is better to view its *beams* on the pavement, than its *body* in the firmament. The readiest way to know whether you are in Christ, is to know whether Christ be in you: for the fruit on the tree is more visible than the root of the tree.

18. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To set out for God at our beginning, and to hold out with God unto the end.*

First, To set out for God at our beginning. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* In the distillation of strong waters, the first drawn is fullest of spirits. *The first of the*

first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. God prizes a Christian in the bud; and delights in the blossoms of youth, above the sheddings of old age.

Is it not a pity that those plants should be found in Egypt, that will thrive so well in Canaan?

Naturalists inform us, that the most oriental pearls are generated of the morning dew. Had any of the children of Israel stayed to pass through the Red Sea with the Egyptians, they would probably have perished with them. That field is full of the richest corn, which is cleansed from its noxious weeds in the *spring*.

How pleasant is it to see the thousands of Israel seeking the heavenly manna in the morning of their lives! Is it not better to cry for mercy on earth with the publican, than to call for water in hell with Dives? To discover grace in an old sinner, is *well*; but to view it in vigorous youth, is *better*. All the beasts of sacrifice were offered to God in their prime. Jesus was carried in triumph upon a *colt*, the *foal* of an ass.

No music could ever equalize the heaven-born cries of new-born babes. When the snow-drops of youth appear in the garden of the church, it evinces that there is a glorious summer approaching.

If youth be sick of the *will-nots*, old age is in danger of dying of the *shall-nots*. It is hard to cast off the devil's yoke, when we have worn it long upon our necks. *Can a man be born again when he is old?* Grace seldom grafts upon such withered stocks.—An old sinner is nearer to the second death, than he is to the second birth. It

is more likely to see him taken out of the flesh, than the flesh taken out of him. His body is nearer to corruption, than his soul is to salvation.

Where the enemy is the strongest, there the victory is the hardest. Usually, where the devil pleads antiquity, he keeps propriety. As there are none so old, as that they should despair of mercy; so there are none so young, as that they should presume on mercy. If God's to-day be too soon for thy repentance, thy to-morrow may be too late for his acceptance. Mercy's clock does not always strike at our back. The longer poison stays in the stomach, so much the more dangerous are its effects. O how amiable are the golden apples of grace, in the silver pictures of blooming youth! God prizes a young friend, but punishes an old enemy. Old sinners are much like old serpents, the fullest of poison.

It is singularly pleasant to view the *Ancient of days*, in *infants in days*; and to see green pieces of timber being squared for the celestial building. Blessed are those, in whom grace is in its prosperity, while their nature is in its minority. *I have more understanding than my teachers.* His youth was wiser than their age. His dawning was brighter than their noon-tide: and this was the more admirable, because it was in his youth; for when our lives are the most vigorous, our lusts are the most boisterous.

You teach a cur while he is a whelp, and break a horse while he is a colt. A plentiful harvest is the issue of an early seed-time.

Young reader, remember that your youthful sins

lay a foundation for aged sorrows. You have but one arrow to shoot at the mark; and if that be shot at random, God may never put another into your bow.

I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending; the first and the last. He that is the first and the last, should be served from the first to the last. You can never come too soon *to* him who is your beginning; and you can never stay too long *with* him who is your ending. The flower of life is of Christ's setting; and shall it be of the devil's cropping?

But what is *setting out*, without *holding out?* Mutability is at best but the badge of infirmity. It can only be those trees which are unsound at their roots, that cease from putting forth leaves in their season. Those who at present are inwardly corrupt, will in futurity be openly profane. False grace is always declining, till it be wholly lost; but true grace goes from a morning's dawn unto a meridian splendour. The wool on the sheep's back, if it be shorn, will grow again; but the wool on the sheep's skin, clip that, and there will come no more in its room.

Nature teaches us that there is nothing permanent that is violent. A stone that is mounted upwards, when it loses its impress, sinks downwards. It is just to be cast off from God, for casting off the ways and work of God. A finger divorced from the hand receives no influence from the head. He that deserts his colours, deserves to be cashiered the camp.

Many have gone from one religion unto *all*, till at last they are come from all religions unto *none*.

—Every variation from unity, is but a progression towards nullity. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* He hath a crown for the runner, but a curse for the run-away. God accounts not himself served at all, if he be not *always* served. It is not enough to begin our course well, unless it be crowned with perseverance.

We live in the fall of the leaf; divers trees did put forth fair blossoms, but their flattering spring is turned into an unfruitful winter; and their clear mornings have been overcast with the thickest clouds. The corn which promised a large harvest in the blade of profession, is blasted in the ear. The light remains no longer than while the sun shines. When God ceases to be gracious, man ceases to be righteous.

The flowers of paradise would quickly wither on earth, if they were not watered with drops from heaven. How have the mighty fallen, when the Almighty hath not stood by them! The devil would soon put out our candles, if Christ did not carry them in his lantern. *Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.* To see a ship sink in the harbour of profession, is more grievous than if it had perished in the open sea of profaneness.

There goes the same power to strengthen a saint as to quicken a sinner. He who sets us up and makes us holy, must keep us up and make us steady. How many professors have seemed to be just ready to cast an eternal anchor, when a contrary wind has drove them to sea, and they have perished for ever! *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? and, Judah, what shall I do unto thee?*

Why, what is the matter? *Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.*

Some have beat Jehu's march; they have driven furiously in religion, but within a few years they have knocked off their chariot wheels. After they have lifted up their hands to God, they have lifted up their heels against him. That man's beginning was in hypocrisy, whose ending is in apostacy.—Reader, you look for happiness as long as God hath a being in heaven, and God looks for holiness as long as you have a being on earth. *He that endures to the end shall be saved.*

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. He that draws back from his profession on earth, shall be kept back from any possession in heaven. He that departs *in* the faith, shall be saved; but he that departs *from* the faith, shall be damned.

That mariner has no praise, who sinks his ship before he comes to the harbour; that soldier obtains no glory, who lays down his arms in the heat of the battle. Some say, that the chrysolite, which is of a golden colour in the morning, loses its splendour before the evening: such are the glittering shews of hypocrites. Though fiery meteors fall to the earth, yet fixed stars remain in heaven.

When once that fire which is laid on God's altar is kindled, it shall no more be quenched. Grace may be shaken in the soul, but it cannot be shaken out of the soul. It may be a *bruised* reed, but it shall never be a *broken* reed.

Christ is more tender of his body mystical, than

he was of his body natural. Though a believer may fall foully, yet he shall never fall finally. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the heirs of heaven.

The fiery darts of the devil, which in themselves are intentionally mortal, shall be to saints eventually medicinal: these bees may sting him, but their venom shall not destroy him. His light may be eclipsed for a time; but the sun will break forth again.

Under the law, the Lord had his evening as well as his morning sacrifice. *No man that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* Our labours are never fulfilled, till our days are fulfilled. There is nothing constant, but what is pleasant. Though a saint may sometimes be weary *in* doing the work of the Lord, yet he is at no time weary *of* doing the work of the Lord. There may be a suspension of the operation of grace; but there cannot be a destruction of the being of grace. This babe may lie upon a sick-bed; but it shall never lie upon a death-bed.

Christ is stiled the *finisher* of our faith, as well as the *author* of our faith. There is as much necessity for the Spirit to keep up our graces, as there is to bring forth our graces.

Indifference *in* religion, is the first step to apostacy *from* religion. Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling; yet they are kept from falling altogether. They may shew an indifference toward Christ for a time; but they shall not depart from Christ for ever. The trees of righteousness may have their autumn; but they shall also

have their spring. There is never so low an ebb, but there is also as high a tide.

Christians are like *crocodiles*, which grow till they die: or like the *moon*, which increases her beauty till she is at the full. They have no desire of putting off the robes of purity, while they are on this side eternity. They wish to hold the sword of religion in their hands, till God sets the crown of glory upon their heads.

Professing reader, if the service of God be not the way of safety to you, why do you set forth in it? but if it be, why do you shrink back from it? Usually, they who ride fastest at the beginning of their journey, are the first who talk of halting on the road.—See what a sparkling diamond there is set in the Apostle's crown: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of glory. Paul* the *warrior*, was *Paul* the *conqueror*; and *Paul* the *conqueror*, was *Paul* the *crowned*.

Jesus Christ is never a father to abortive children. Where he gives strength to conceive, he gives strength to bring forth. He turns the bruised reed into a brazen pillar, and the smoking flax into a prevailing flame.

19. Another singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To take all the shame of his sins unto himself, and to give all the glory of his services unto Christ.*

Many people take all the glory of their services to themselves, and lay all the shame of their sins on him; as if he who died on earth to redeem us

from them, shall live in heaven to confirm us *in them.*

The devil may flatter us, but he cannot force us; he may tempt us to sin, but he cannot compel us to sin. He could never come off a conqueror, were he not joined by our forces. The *fire* is *his,* but the *tinder* is *ours.* He could never enter into our houses, if we did not set open our doors.

Many complain for want of liberty, who thrust their feet in satan's fetters. *The woman thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* As if he had said, *I took that as a gift from her, whom thou gavest as a gift to me.* It is the worst of sins to charge *God* with *our sins.* They may receive their *punishment* from him, but they shall never receive their *nourishment* from him. He cannot be the *unrighteous upholder* of what he is the *righteous avenger.*

O blasphemy, to charge that sun with darkness, by which the heavens are enlightened; or that sea with a want of moisture, by which the whole earth is watered! Our impiety is as truly the offspring of our souls, as our posterity is the issue of our bodies. *Every good and perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* Whatsoever is *truly good,* hath its origin in God. Now the same spring cannot send forth both sweet and bitter waters. It is a known rule, that contraries destroy each other.

Many have more leaves to cover their wickedness, than they have garments to cover their nakedness. They lay their *heresy* at the door of the

sanctuary; and call their diabolical seductions, evangelical revelations; as if the Father of light could bring forth the issues of darkness. What is this, but to set a crown of *lead* upon a head of *gold?*

We can defile ourselves, but we cannot cleanse ourselves. The sheep can go astray alone, but can never return to the fold without the assistance of the shepherd. Till we taste the bitterness of our own misery, we shall never relish the sweetness of God's mercy. Till we see how foul our sins have made us, we shall never pay our tribute of praise to Christ for washing us.

If we were left to ourselves but for a moment, we should destroy ourselves in that moment. We are like glasses without a bottom, which are no sooner loosed than they fall. Many advance themselves to depreciate Christ; but we should look upon ourselves as nothing, and Christ as every thing. *Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Paul was willing to be esteemed a cypher, so that Christ might stand for a figure. Well may we abase ourselves for his advancement, who abased himself for our establishment. *Let Luther be accounted a devil, so Christ may be exalted as a God;* said that flaming seraph of himself.

Without me, ye can do nothing. The pen may as soon write without the hand that holds it, as our hearts work except the Spirit move them. Not only the *enjoyment* of our talents is from God; but the *improvement* of them is from him. *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.* It is not my pains, but thy pound, that hath done it.

The children of God are like a clock, which soon stands still, if it be not wound up. *Did not our hearts burn within us?* But how long did the flame last? All the time he talked with them. When he gave over breathing on them, their fuel gave over burning.

Gracious hearts are like stars in the heavens, which shine not by their own splendour. He that takes the brick, must give the straw to make it. There is no water except he smite the rock, nor fire except he strike the flint.

If he call us to the work of angels, he will supply us with the strength of angels. *For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* A Christless soul is also a strengthless soul. Man is indebted to God for what he has, but God is not beholden to man for what he does. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen!* The humble heart knows no foundation but God's grace; and the upright man knows no end but God's glory.

Waters may rise as high as they fall. Whatsoever action hath God for its author, hath God for its centre. A circular line makes its ending where it had its beginning.

Reader, take heed of turning a sacred privilege into a privy sacrilege. If God give that grace which is not due to you, will you deny the praise which is due to him?

The wicked make their end their God; but we make God our end. The firmament is made more glorious by one sun, than by all the stars that stud the heavens. Thus Jesus Christ hath more glory

given to him from one saint, than from all the world beside. He takes more pleasure in their prayers, and is more honoured by their praise.

Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. From the lowest act of nature, to the highest act of grace, there is no argument for the pride of man; but every consideration for the praise of God. If he make our *nature gracious*, we should make his *name glorious*. He that would be fingering the honour of God, is not worthy to receive the honour of a man. Cæsar once said to his opponent, 'Either I will be Cæsar, or nobody.' So the Lord saith, Either I will be a great God, or no God. That man disparages the beauty of the sun, who sets it upon a level with the twinkling stars.

The glory of God is the golden butt at which all the arrows of obedience are shot, otherwise they fall short of their mark.

The body has two eyes, but the soul must have but one; and that so firmly fixed upon Christ, as never once to glance beside him. A single *eye* is fittest for a single object.

When the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying, The Gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. But do they take that glory to themselves, which is idolatrously given to them from others? No. *Why do you these things? we also are men of like passions with you.* As if they had said, *We are so far from possessing the glorious perfections of God, that we are clothed with all the weaknesses and passions of men.*

Ungodly Herod was not like Paul and Silas.

The people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man!* What the people gave *foolishly*, he took *fearlessly*. *And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory.* Ah, how soon this worm-eaten wretch was a wretch eaten up of worms! Every little river pays its tribute to the *great sea;* and shall we refuse ours to the *great God?*

As there is no time in which God is not blessing his children; so there should be no time in which his people are not blessing him. As he designs our happiness in all he does; so it is but reasonable that we should seek his honour in all we do. We have no way to turn the streams unto God, the ocean of all bounty, but through the pipes of gratitude.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. It is very meet that he should be magnified by us, when he makes us meet to be glorified with him. The whisperings of the voice are echoed back in an exact concave.

The body of man can stoop for a pin, as well as for a pound. As the best of means should make us fruitful, so the least of mercies should make us thankful. *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever.* Whatsoever ointment is poured out upon Christ's head, will run down to the skirts of his garment. What a saint gives to Christ in copper, shall be returned to him in silver: yea, the only way to keep our crowns on our heads, is to cast them down at his feet.

20. The last singular action of a sanctified Christian, is, *To value a heavenly reversion above an earthly possession.*

Some say, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but surely such a bird in the bush is worth two in the hand. If others dote upon the streams, let us admire the fountain.

Socrates being asked what countryman he was; answered, 'I am a citizen of the whole world.' But ask a Christian what countryman he is; and he will answer, 'I am a citizen of all heaven.' Believers build their tombs where others build their tabernacles. The men of the world fix upon the things of the world; that is the cabinet wherein they lock up all their jewels. Though God has given the earth to beasts, yet such beasts are men, as to give themselves to the earth.

It was the saying of a cursed cardinal, 'I prefer a part in the honours of Paris, to a part in the happiness of paradise.' What is the glimmering of a candle, to the shining of the sun? or the value of brass, compared with gold? Thoughtless children are taken up more with *present counters*, than with *future crowns*. Thus, while the shadow is embraced, the substance is neglected; and short-sighted man courts the veil, when he should admire the face.

That man who is a labouring bee for earthly prosperity, will be but an idle drone for heavenly felicity. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

There is no need of blotting out the characters

of our *affections,* but of writing them on fairer paper. There is no necessity for drying up these running waters, but for diverting them into their proper channels. Why should we wholly destroy these valuable plants, when they might thrive so well in a better soil? He who looks upon heaven with desire, will look upon earth with disdain. Our affections were made for the things which are above us, and not for the things which are about us.

What is an earthly manor, compared to an heavenly mansion? As carnal things seem small to a spiritual man, so spiritual things appear small to a carnal man. There is no moving after things beyond the sphere of our own knowledge. Heaven is to the worldling as a mine of gold covered with earth and rubbish; or as a bed of pearl enclosed in a heap of sand. But if he had the eyes of an eagle to see it, he would wish for the wings of an eagle to soar unto it.

How little would the great world seem to us, if the great God were not so little in us. Either men have no thoughts of a future state, or else they have low thoughts of a future state. If we had souls without any bodies, then there would be no need of the earth to keep us; if we had bodies without any souls, there would be no need of heaven to crown us.

Such as have no present holiness, are for a present happiness. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?* Any good will serve the turns of those who know not the *chief good.* But David adds, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy*

countenance upon us. O how sordid is it for men to prefer the garlic and onions of Egypt, to the milk and honey of Canaan! Visible things to them, are better than invisible. They mind the world that is come so much, as if it would never have an end; and the world to come so little, as if it would never have a beginning.

Reader, why should you be so taken up with your riches, when you will be so soon taken from your riches? Why do you dote upon a flower, which a day may wither? As you are travelling *beyond* the world, so also it would be your wisdom to be trading *above* the world. But, alas, such are not easily awaked, who fall so fast asleep on the world's pillow.

When the Gauls had tasted the wine of Italy, they asked where the grapes grew; and would never be quiet till they came there. Thus may you cry, *O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!* A believer is willing to lose the world, for the enjoyment of grace; and he is willing to leave the world, for the fruition of glory.

As the worst on this side eternity, compared with hell, is mercy; so the best on this side eternity, compared with heaven, is misery. There is no more comparison to be made between heaven and earth, than there is between a piece of rusty iron and refined gold. St. Austin saith, 'The hope of life immortal, is the life of our mortal lives.' It is the expectation of a future glorious heritage, which is the Jacob's-staff of saints, with which they walk through this dark pilgrimage.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable; but because we have hope in Christ after this life, we may be of all men the most comfortable. Though we have desires in the world, yet we have no desires after the world. *For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.* A believer longs most for that place where he shall be best. He not only grows in grace, but groans for glory.

Perfection is the boundary of the strongest expectation. As it is satisfied with nothing less, so it looks for nothing more. Every thing in eternity is wound up to its highest capacity. It is in heaven that mercy will be received unmixed, and majesty viewed unveiled. What is a worthless pebble, compared with a matchless pearl?

What a sweet salutation is that of the Saviour to his servant, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!* O, what joy shall enter into the believer, when he shall enter into the joy of his Redeemer! Then the vessels of mercy shall have sea-room enough in the ocean of glory.

Those whom love has closely united together, cannot contentedly dwell for ever asunder. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world.* That which makes hell so full of horror, is, that it is below all hopes; and that which makes heaven so full of splendour, is, that it is above all fears. The one is a night without the return of day; the other is a day free from the approach of night.

Who would not seek after glory with the greatest diligence, and wait for glory with the greatest patience? seeing we advance the interest, while we stay for the principal.

There are some deluded professors, who aspire after earthly grandeur; as if the place where saints are crucified were the place where they are glorified. This were to consider the church in a triumphant, rather than in a militant condition. The ark of the church, which is now tossed upon a tumultuous sea, shall then rest in the harbour of eternal tranquillity.

In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. Our Redeemer is our forerunner. He that takes possession of us on earth, takes possession for us in heaven. As we are not long here without him, so he will not be long there without us. Here all the earth is not enough for *one carnal* man, but there one heaven shall be enough for *all Christian* men. In this life there are showers of tears fall from the saint's eyes, but in that life there shall be a sunshine of glory in the saint's heart.

Many temptations may withstand a heaven-born soul, but no temptation shall finally prevail against him. Flying birds are never taken in a fowler's snare. What is all that we enjoy here, but as a dying spark of that living flame? as a languishing ray of that illustrious sun? or as a small drop of that overflowing spring?

In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in believing, oh,

how much is there in beholding! What is the wooing day, to the wedding day? What is the sealing of the conveyance, to the enjoyment of the inheritance? or the fore-tastes of glory, to the fulness of glory? The good things of that life are so great, as not to be measured; so many, as not to be enumerated; and so precious, as not to be estimated.

If the picture of holiness be so comely in its *rough draught,* how lovely a piece will it be in all its perfections! Every grace which is here seen in its *minority,* shall be seen there in its *maturity.*

APPLICATION.

HAVING dispatched that which is *doctrinal,* I now come to the discussion of that which is *practical.* And I shall here propose two considerations:

First, *For the erection of singular principles.*

Secondly, *The direction of singular practices.*

I. *For the erection of singular principles.*

Natural men obey natural principles, and spiritual men obey spiritual principles. No man can expect that bitter roots should produce sweet fruits. Though civil principles may be kindled at the torch of nature, yet sacred principles are lighted at the blaze of scripture.

Now there are *twenty singular principles,* which I shall consider as the rise and spring of *singular practices.*

1. The first principle that believers walk by, is this: *That whatsoever is transacted by men on earth, is eyed by the Lord in heaven.*

A man may hide God from himself, and yet he cannot hide himself from God. This, even a prodigal could acknowledge: *I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight.* When a man wishes God to be like himself, it argues that he is vicious; but when he desires to be like God, it indicates that he is virtuous.

A false God would be most acceptable to a false heart. For, *their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.* They have mouths, but they speak not for our direction; eyes have they, but they see not our condition; they have ears, but they hear not our supplication; they have hands, but they work not our redemption. These were not the gods that made men; but the gods that men made.

But all things are naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. We cannot always see his will in his works, but he can always discover our works in our will. To him the most hidden roots are as visible as the uppermost branches. Though the place where we sin be to men as dark as Egypt, yet to God it is as light as Goshen.

That advice which one gave to his friend privately, is worthy to be adopted publicly. 'So act towards men, as in the sight of God: and so pray to God, as in the sight of men.' He is a bold thief who will cut your purse while you look in his face.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. The Lord sees faults where men see none. Atoms, which are invisible in the candle-light of reason, are all made to dance naked in the sun-shine of omniscience.

Cato was so grave and so good a man, that none would behave unseemly in his presence: whence it grew to a proverbial caveat, 'Take heed what you do, for Cato sees you!' How reproachful is it to us, that the eyes of a man should have more effect upon our manners, than the penetrating eyes of God!

Momus, one of the heathen gods, is said to have complained of Vulcan, that he had not set a grate at every man's breast. God hath a glazed window in the darkest houses of clay: he sees what is done in them, when none other can. To God's omnipotence there is nothing impossible; and to God's omniscience there is nothing invisible. I never look for those persons to strain at *gnats*, who will easily and greedily swallow *camels*.

What is the reason that men do the works of darkness, but that they think they do their works in gross darkness? They suppose that no eye sees them, no not his eye, that doth nothing else but see. *And thou sayest, how doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not.* Ah, how fain would the hand of man draw a veil over the face of God.

An unsound creature would be an unseen creature. *Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that*

planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? What, will you make him deaf, who gives you ears? and him blind, who gives you eyes? This is acting like a beast among men, and not as a man among beasts. But, *the Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vanity.* And this is the vainest thought of them all, that he knows not the vanity of their thoughts.

Reader, you cannot set down your lusts in such characters, but that the eyes of God can read them. As he can save in the greatest extremity, so he can see in the deepest obscurity.

Plato saith of the king of Lydia, that he had a ring, with which, when he turned the head to the palm of his hand, he could see every person; and yet he himself remain invisible. Though we cannot see God while we live, yet he can see how we live. *For his eyes are upon the ways of man; and he seeth all his goings.* Man may gild over the leaves of a blurred life with the profession of holiness; but God can unmask the painted Jezebel of hypocrisy, and lay her naked to her own shame.

Because sin has put out our eyes, we vainly imagine that it hath put out God's. Because we behold not what he does in heaven *for* us, we think that he sees not what we do on earth *against* him.

Men care not what they do, when they believe that God sees not what is done. *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. They say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. The adulterer waits for the twilight.* His sin gets up, when the sun goes

down. The time of darkness pays most tribute to the prince of darkness. There are many that blush to confess their faults, who never blush to commit them.

When poor Adam had sinned, he sought not the fairest fruits to satisfy his hunger, but the broadest leaves to cover his nakedness. It is God's gracious eye placed upon us, that makes us religious; and it is our believing eye fixed on him, that keeps us prosperous. What servant is there, who would sleep under the view of his master? or what soldier would appear a coward in the presence of his prince?

2. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That after all his present receivings, he will be brought to his future reckonings.*

Thus the certain rich man dealt with his steward: *Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.* Man's enjoyment of outward blessings, is not a *lordship*, but a *stewardship*. God communicates those good things of life to men, not that they should lay them up for their own vanity; but that they should lay them out for his glory. The richest man had as poor a beginning as the meanest; and the poorest will have as rich an end as the wealthiest.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. St. Austin says, 'We can never do that, except we number every day as our last day.' Many put far the evil day. They refuse to leave the earth, when the earth is about to take its leave of them.

Persons of the greatest eminence have anciently

had their monitors. Agathocles, a Sicilian prince, had his earthen plate set before him, to remind him that he had been a *potter*. The Roman triumphers, in the meridian of their splendour, had a servant behind them, crying to each, *Memento te esse hominem*. That is, 'Remember that you are only a man.'

Men, who are gods in *office*, are too apt to think themselves gods in *essence*: but the change of the name can make no change in the man. The royal psalmist, who was raised to princely dignity, ridicules such an haughty prince's vanity: *I have said, ye are gods, but ye shall die like men.* All human divinity will soon be shrouded in mortality; and those who would appear as gods before men, shall soon appear as men before God.

Death levels the highest mountains with the lowest valleys. He mows down the fairest lilies, as well as the foulest thistles. The robes of illustrious princes, and the rags of homely peasants, are both laid aside in the wardrobe of the grave.

As the cloud and the pillar which led Israel through the wilderness, left them on the brink of Jordan; so shall all the glittering shows of life be forgotten in the solemn article of death. Then those ungodly mortals, who were determined not to approach a throne of grace, shall be obliged to appear before a throne of judgment. *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

At the shrill voice of the last trumpet, every

gaoler shall deliver up all his prisoners. Now we see the living fall into the arms of death; but then we shall behold the dead awake, and rise to an unchanging life. Then the scattered dust of all Adam's children shall ride upon the wings of the wind, till it meet together in its own bodies.

Then the purchased bodies of saints shall be claimed by their heavenly owner. *Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.* All the various animals which have feasted on human flesh, shall then find that their food was too rich for digestion. The bellies of beasts and whales are not always to be the bed of God's Jonahs. Death will cut us down; but he shall not eternally keep us down.

Now the same glorious person who shall come to raise the dead, will also come to judge the dead. *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.* The same rule which God has given the world to act by, the same rule has he taken to himself to judge by.

Reader, if you obstinately and finally disobey the precious truth of God, revealed from heaven to you; you must suffer the eternal wrath of God, revealed from heaven against you. Though you may now hardenedly resist the judgments which he sets before your eyes; yet you cannot then resist those which he will angrily pour out upon your soul.

Poor sinner! will you yet so wilfully embrace those poisonous vipers, your lusts, which will so assuredly sting you with the pains of eternal death?

Why will you rashly pursue any thing in this world, which will subject you to the intolerable curse of God in another?

God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. It is the Son of man, by whom the believing world was *redeemed;* and it will be by the same Son of man, that the whole world shall be *judged.* He who was guarded to the cross by a band of soldiers, shall soon be attended to the bench by a shining company of angels.

The ancient Thebans pictured their judges without eyes, that they might not respect persons; and without hands, to denote that no bribes should be received. *But the Judge of all the earth shall do right.* The wills of human judges are to be regulated by the laws of righteousness; but so glorious is the heavenly Judge, that even the laws of righteousness are regulated by his will. As all his works are great and marvellous, so are all his ways just and righteous.

Reader, there will be no possibility of standing *before* Christ, but by standing *in* Christ. What hopes can you entertain of an acquittal at the general assize, if your conscience condemn you before you appear at the bar?

Those who freight their minds with carnal pleasures, will one day be condemned for carrying contraband commodities. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine own eyes.* This were brave indeed, if it could but be secured for

ever: but, alas, after the flash of lightning, then comes the dreadful clap of thunder: *But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* This is just as if God had said, 'Well, poor sinner, run down the hill as fast as you please; but know, that you will be sure to break your neck at last.'

This is the day of God's long-suffering, but the judgment-day will be the day of the sinner's long-suffering. Here the cords of patience do, as it were, tie the hands of vengeance; but our Sampson may at last be roused, and break all these cords, and then woe be to the Philistines! Sinners may have sparing patience exercised *towards* them; and yet, not have converting grace revealed *in* them. All such, at the world's end, will be at their wit's end.

He who now shakes his sword over the hardened sinner's head, will in the great day sheath it in his heart. In the awful storm of death, if his vessel be wrecked, there will be no plank to swim to shore upon.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Thus, all who refuse and reject him as a refining fire, must be obliged to meet and feel him as a consuming fire. How can they endure the *wrath* of the Lamb, who have uniformly disregarded the *death* of the Lamb? If the night of death find them *graceless,* the day of judgment will find them *speechless.*

St. Peter informs us of some, who deridingly challenged God to come to judgment: *There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts: and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?* These cowards may boast and discharge the artillery of their venom, and appear as conquering heroes at a distance; but when he appears with his *naked* sword, they will wish for the wings of the wind, wherewith to make their escape. As a dying man has generally a short revival before his departure, and as an expiring candle gives a brighter glare when just going out; so these, in their boasted security, will be surprised with eternal misery.

As mercy lets no service pass unregarded, so justice lets no sin pass unrevenged. He who now makes no account of his coming, will have a sad account to give at his coming.

One observes, that the resurrection of the body is placed between the forgiveness of sins and everlasting glory; to shew, that then only can the resurrection of the body be a benefit, when remission of sin precedes it, and eternal life succeeds it.

It is reported of an Hungarian king, who being on a time extremely dejected, was asked the cause of it by his brother: 'Oh! I have been a great sinner against God,' said he, 'and know not how I shall appear before him in judgment!' His brother ridiculed these his thoughts as too melancholy, and as unworthy of a moment's place in the breast of a king. The king then made no further reply; but it was customary in that country, that if the executioner sounded a trumpet at any man's door, he was presently to be had forth to execution.

The king, at midnight, sent the trumpeter to sound an alarm at his brother's door; which so terrified him, that he ran to the king with a trembling heart, a pale and frightful countenance, and besought him to make known wherein he had offended him. 'O brother,' said the king, 'you have never displeased me: but if the sight of mine executioner be so dreadful in your eyes, what must the sight of God's be in mine?'

Reader, if you have uniformly lifted up your rebellious hand *against* Christ, how will you be able to lift up your guilty head *before* Christ? *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be bad.* If men were to be their own judges, they would never be just judges. But God shall bring every work into judgment. As he is too merciful to condemn the innocent, so he is too just to acquit the guilty.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Though the arrows of idle words may be shot out of sight for a season; yet they will certainly hereafter fall down upon the heads of those who discharged them. Reader, if your servant be capable of offending you by his words, is it not as reasonable to suppose that you are capable of offending God with your's?

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. Than a good tongue, there is nothing better; than an evil tongue, there is nothing worse. Jesus Christ will in the great day pass a sentence upon every sentence that has passed. There is in

the same rose, honey for the bee, and poison for the spider.

The same person who shall say, 'Come, ye blessed,' will also say, 'Go, ye cursed.' As blessing and cursing proceed out of the mouth of the same man, so they will out of the mouth of Christ. Man's is a curse of wicked execration, but Christ's is a curse of righteous execution. As the same wind may send one vessel into the haven, and sink another in the ocean; so shall the same voice of Christ doom the sinner to eternal death, and welcome the saint to eternal life. That gate which is opened for a citizen to go abroad for recreation, may also be opened for a malefactor to go out to execution.

Reader, how sad is that tragedy which shall never be ended! On the stage of eternity, the rich man's bags will be emptied, to see how the poor man's box has been filled. Then the charge of the pilgrim's journey will be examined in the steward's accounts. Ah, how can you hear the doleful knell of an everlasting funeral! Will those transient glances of former prosperity lessen the intolerable weight of future calamity?

The wheat and the chaff may grow together, but they shall not always lie together. There may be but the breathing of a few moments between the sinner and everlasting burning. The day of retribution will prove to him a day of separation. While the wheat is secured in the garner, the tares are consumed in the fire.

Sinner, if you *now* hold the righteous in derision, you would *then* give a thousand worlds to be their

companion. Then their enjoyments will be incomparably pleasant, while your torments shall be intolerably painful. The *sea* of damnation will not be sweetened with a *drop* of compassion. If once you fall into hell, you will, after millions of ages are elapsed, be as far from coming out, as you were at going in.

There will not be a sinner in heaven to interrupt the joys of saints, nor a saint in hell to soften or soothe the anguish of sinners. Those who have the ear-mark of election, and those who have the hand-mark of transgression, shall be put into separate folds.

How will those magistrates appear, who have stained the sword of authority with the blood of innocency? They have turned its back against the vicious, and whet its edge against the righteous. Many an unjust judge, who now sits confidently on the bench, will then stand trembling at the bar.

How will those ministers appear, who, like the dog and wolf, combine to macerate the flock? who, instead of treading out the corn, tread it down? and instead of furthering the birth, have strangled the child?

How will fair-faced, gilded professors appear, when they shall be found no better than hell's freeholders? How will they appear, when the painted sepulchre shall be opened, and the dead men's bones disclosed? They will not be judged by the whiteness of their hands, but by the blackness of their consciences. The black hand must then part with its white glove. That solemn day will be too *critical* for the *hypocritical*. All those

who now *colour* for *shew*, will then be *shewn* in their own *colours*.

3. Another principle that believers should walk by, is this: *That God bears a greater respect to their hearts, than he doth to their works.*

God looks most, where man looks least. *My Son, give me thine heart.* We cannot trust God with too much, or ourselves with too little. The *first* is our merciful keeper; the *last* is our barbarous traitor. Here you have the dignity with which a believer is invested, and the duty to which he is invited.

The God of heaven and earth sues from heaven to earth. He who is all in all *to* us, calls for that which is all in all *in* us. We may commit our estates into the hands of men, but we must not commit our hearts into the hands of any but God. There are none of our spirits so good, but he deserves them; or so bad, that he cannot refine them.

On whom do parents bestow their hearts, but upon their children? and on whom should children bestow their's, but upon their parents?

Ah, how unwilling is man to give what he has no right to keep! As God prefers the heart to every thing, such is the wickedness of man, that he will give God any thing but the heart. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.* Heartless operations are but hearty dissimulation. Men may keep their works to themselves, if they refuse to yield their hearts to Jesus Christ. He that regards the heart, without any thing; he also will not regard any thing, without the heart.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. He who makes all he hath, has a right to have all he makes. The formalist is all for outward activity, and the sensualist is all for inward sincerity. The *first* hath nothing within him, therefore he is for that which is outward; the *second* hath nothing without, therefore he is for that which is inward. But it is not the pretence of inward sincerity, that can justify outward impiety; nor a shew of outward piety, that will excuse for inward hypocrisy.

Though the brain be the spring of sensitive motion, yet the heart is the original spring of vital motion. The heart is the first that lives, and the last that dies. *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Vain* thoughts defile the heart, as well as *vile* thoughts. Snails leave their slime behind them, as well as serpents.

If the leprosy take hold of a single thread, it will soon spread over the whole piece. Though sinful thoughts will rise, yet they should not reign. Though these birds may hover over the Christian's heart, yet he cannot wish them to build their nests in it.

The devil knows, that if there be any good treasure, it is in our hearts; and he would gladly have the key of these cabinets, that he might rob us of our jewels. A heart which is sanctified, is better than a tongue that is silvered. He that gives only the skin of worship to God, receives only the shell of comfort from God.

It is not the bare touching of the strings, that

makes an harmonious tune. A spiritual man may pray carnally, but a carnal man cannot pray spiritually. If God's mercies do not eat out the heart of our sins, our sins will soon eat out the heart of our duties. A work that is heartless, is a work that is fruitless. God cares not for the crazy cabinet, but for the precious jewel.

It is said of Hannibal, the great Carthagenian commander, that he was the first that went into the field of battle, and the last that came out of it. Thus should it be in all the operations of a Christian; the heart should be the first that comes into the house of God, and the last that goes out of it. In prayer, the heart should first speak the words, and then the words should speak the sentiments of the heart. If the heart be inditing a good matter, the tongue then will be as the pen of a ready writer.

It is observed of the spider, that in the morning, before she seeks her prey, she mends her broken web; and in doing this, she always begins in the middle. And shall those who call themselves Christians, rise and pursue the callings and profits of the world, and yet be unconcerned about the broken webs of their lives, and especially of their hearts?

Those who would have the cocks run with wholesome water, should look well to the springs that supply them. The heart is the presence chamber, where the King of glory takes up his residence. That which is most worthy in us, should be resigned to him who is most worthy of us.

Good words, without the heart, are but flattery; and *good works*, without the heart, are but hypocrisy. Though God pities stumbling Israelites, yet he punishes halting *hypocrites*.

It is reported of Bishop Cranmer, that after his flesh and bones were consumed in the flames, his heart was found whole. A gracious man is clothed with sincerity in the midst of his infirmities.

God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. None can ever give him the heart of their services, unless they are enabled to give him their hearts in their services. The sorrowful sighing of the heart in worship, is preferable to the most elevated and harmonious voice. One is the exertion of nature, the other is the production of grace. Pride may be at the root of one, but God is the foundation of the other. One may ravish our ears, but the other ravishes God's heart.

It is said of the Lacedæmonians, who were a poor and homely people, that they offered lean sacrifices to their gods; and that the Athenians, who were a wise and wealthy people, offered fat and costly sacrifices; and yet in their wars the former had always the mastery of the latter. Whereupon, they went to the oracle to know the reason why those should speed worst, who gave most. The oracle returned this answer to them: 'That the Lacedæmonians were a people who gave their *hearts* to their gods, but that the Athenians only gave their *gifts* to their gods.' Thus a heart without a gift is better than a gift without a heart.

Religion is a sacrifice; but the heart is the altar upon which it must be offered. As the body is at the command of the head who rules it; so should the soul be at the command of God who gives it. For a man to take his body to the service of God, and leave his soul behind him, is as if a person should send his garments stuffed with straw, instead of making a personal appearance.

4. Another principle by which believers will walk, is this: *That there is more final bitterness in reflecting upon sin, than there can be present sweetness in the commission of sin.*

The ways of sin may have popular approbation; but they shall also have divine odium marked upon them. This Delilah may please us for a time, but she will betray us at last. Though Satan's apples may have a fair skin, yet they certainly have a bitter core.

Methinks the flaming sword in one hand, and the golden sceptre in the other, should guard us from the forbidden tree; and make our hearts like wet tinder to all the sparks of Satan.

Reader, if you behold nothing but pleasure in the commission of sin, you will experience nothing but the most cutting pain in its conclusion. *The wages of sin is death.* All workmen should have their wages; and those who employ you, it is but reasonable that they should pay you. But however you may delight in the works of sin, you will by no means relish the wages of sin. Ah, what wise man would toil so long in sin's drudgery, whose wages are no better than eternal misery!

Though all sins are not equal in their nature,

yet all sins are in their very nature mortal. The candle of man's life is blown out by the wind of his lusts. The corruption of nature tends to the dissolution of nature. When the plague was in the Jewish houses, they were forthwith to be demolished. It is at that enemy sin, that God shoots all his arrows.

Reader, you began to be mortal, when you began to be sinful. If you had never had any thing to do with sin, death could never have had any thing to do with you. It can only be your impiety, which divests you of the chartered blessings of immortality.

Sin is like a serpent in the bosom, which stings you; or like a thief in your closet, who plunders you. It resembles poison in the stomach, or a sword in the bowels; both of which tend to death. Like St. John's book, it may be sweet in your mouth, but it will be bitter in your belly. However fair iniquity might appear to some, it will only be found like a blear-eyed Leah to God.

The foul dregs lie at the bottom of the vessel. Who does not know that the golden cup of sin is filled with the most nauseous ingredients? Sinner! that which is now like a rose flourishing in your bosom, will in a very little time be like a poisoned dagger at your breast. Poor soul, beware of those embraces which are but signals of destruction. While such a Judas kisses, he kills. While the ivy twines round the oak, it eats out its sap.

If sin were not so deceitful, it would not be so delightful. Like an angler, it shews the bait, but

conceals the hook. Now it represents its present painted beauty, but casts a covering over its future obliquity. Wickedness is certainly like a river, which begins in a quiet spring, but ends in a tumultuous sea.

Every being produces its own likeness. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' The grapes of tranquillity cannot grow upon the thorns of impiety. *Inward peace* can only be espoused to *inward purity*. A good way to have conscience untormented, is to have it undefiled. He who made you clean within, will also keep you calm within.

A saint cannot so sin, as to destroy his grace; but he may so sin, as to disturb his peace. The spider cannot destroy the bee-hive, but it may get in and spoil the honey. If you, O man, be found nibbling at the bait, you may justly expect the hook to enter into your bowels!

O think, you who now glory in nothing so much as sin, that there is a time approaching, when you will be ashamed of nothing but sin. You may be eternally sinful, but you cannot be eternally joyful. In hell, all that sugar will be melted, in which the bitter pill was wrapped. This is too hot a climate for wanton delights to live in.

The pleasures of sin are but for a season; but the torments of unpardoned sin are of an eternal duration. Our first parents soon ate of the forbidden fruit; but the world to this day feels that it is not freed from the miserable consequence of that sudden banquet.

Solomon exactly describes sin's rise and fall:

Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. Death will turn all the waters of pleasure into blood. The serpent of sensual delight always carries a deadly sting in its tail. All the meridian glare of worldly pomp will soon end in midnight darkness and horror.

Sinner! will gall and wormwood ever make you pleasant wine? Will thick and poisonous vapours ever yield you sweet and wholesome showers? If you pursue sin for profit, you will never profit by your sin.

O that England did but look with scripture glasses upon all its departing glories, and solemnly say, 'If sin had not been here, they would never have been there.' It is better to take up our lodgings in a bed of snakes, than in a forbidden bed of prevailing lusts. Who would spread the silken sails of the mind upon the piratical ship of wantonness?

When the *pale* horse of *death* goes before, the *red* horse of *wrath* follows after. When the sinner's body goes to the worms to be consumed, then his soul goes to hell to be tormented. A wise man knows that it is far better to *forego* the pleasures of sin here, than to *undergo* the pains of sin hereafter.

Reader, if you delight in sin, I wish you to remember that your *ill-doing* will shortly be your *undoing*. *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* What advantage does Dives now reap in hell, from all the delicate banquets he sat down to on earth? What taste has Cleopatra now, from her draught of dissolved

pearls? The stench and torment of everlasting burnings will take away the sweetest perfumes that ever sin was covered with.

Young Joseph chose rather to be a close prisoner for Christ, than to be an open slave to his lusts. *How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?* It does not only grieve a saint that God is *displeased* at what he does, but that he is *dishonoured* by what he does. He is more distressed for sin which brings evil, than for the evil which sin brings.

When the dumb son of Crœsus saw his father's life in danger, it is said, that he cried out so loud in his fright, that his tongue-strings broke, and he exclaimed, 'O kill not king Crœsus!' Did Christ open his veins for our redemption, and shall not we open our mouths for his vindication?

The crown is fallen from our heads: woe unto us that we have sinned! Sin is not only a monster that unmans us; but it is also a tyrant that uncrowns us. Nay, it not only takes the crown from off the sinner's head, but it also entails the curse upon the sinner's soul.

There are many who vainly suppose that the fountain of their sin is quite dried up, when, alas! the streams are only turned into another channel. A hand taken off from sinful practices, without an heart taken off from sinful principles; is only like a field which, having for a time lain fallow, afterwards springs up with greater increase: or it is like a stream which, having been dammed for a while, at last runs with greater violence, when the sluices are opened.

5. Another singular principle for believers to

walk by, is this: *That there is the greatest vanity in all created excellency.*

If this truth were more believed, this world would he less adored.

A lady being once told that the world in all its glory was but vanity; returned for answer, 'True, I have heard that Solomon said so; but he tried it before he said it, and so will I.' Thus, many believe not a toad to be poisonous, till they are envenomed with it; but they forget that it is not only vanity, but also vexation of spirit; and all who are resolved to try the former, must also feel the latter.

He that knocks at the creature's door for supplies, will find an empty house kept there. 'All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full.' Though all the rising streams of worldly profits may run into the hearts of men; yet they cannot fill up the hearts of men.

Reader, did you never hear a rich man complain of the want of riches? Though he has enough to support him, yet he has not enough to content him. Were it possible for the eye to see all that is to be seen, yet it would not be satisfied with seeing. If there be not enough in the world to satisfy the senses of men, how should there be enough in it to satisfy the souls of men?

The earth is not a satisfying substance, but a fleeting shadow. *For the fashion of this world passeth away.* The most excellent and flourishing appearances in the whole creation are continually hastening to dissolution. We are commanded to use the world, as though we used it not; because

while we use the world, it is not. The tide of worldly grandeur, which brings the gallant ship into the haven, may suddenly leave her in the mud. The higher the sun of prosperity approaches on its meridian, the nearer it is to its setting.

O all ye who caress the world, have ye not seen some who have begun their lives in a palace, end them in a prison? The golden chains about their necks have been turned into iron fetters about their feet. The substance of this life is but for the season of this life. All creature felicity will become a prize to mortality.

Ye who feed upon golden dust, must have all your gold turned to dust; and the short summer of your prosperity will usher in the long winter of adversity. Those who now rejoice in the world, will, before it be long, have no world wherein to rejoice. *Arise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest, because it is polluted; it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.* Heart's-ease is a flower that grows not in the world's garden.

Where does that fish swim, that will not nibble at that hook on which there hangs a golden bait? How many perish for trusting to that which perishes in the using!

Poor worldling, why do you seek for wealth with such incessant anxiety, seeing the greatest misers are laid as naked on their dusty pillow as the poorest beggars? The faster you grasp the world in your hands, the sooner it slides between your fingers.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the world, and lose his own soul? He that bought

this ware, knew its worth. If the world be gained, it may be lost again: but if the soul be lost at death, it can never be recovered. There is a way to *keep* a man out of hell, but no way to *get* a man out of hell. It is as easy for a stone to lodge in the air, as for a man to rest in the earth.

The greatest glory of this world is like a rotten post, which never shows its brightness, but in the dark. How few are there who have resolved to ascend the pinnacle of honour, but what have left a good conscience at the bottom of the ladder! Believers themselves would be surfeited with the world's sweet-meat, if a gracious God were not to call them away from the banquet.

Creature comforts are like the soft morning dews, which, while they water the branches of the tree, leave the roots dry. Why should the professors of Christianity be found eagerly pursuing those trifles, which even heathens have been found flying from? The world is rather a sharp brier to wound us, than a sweet flower to delight us.

As poison works more furiously in wine than in water, so corruptions betray themselves more in a state of plenty than they do in a state of poverty.

Gerhard compares this life to a beautiful nut, which, however fair it may seem, is full of nothing but worms and rottenness. The earth is for a saint's passage; but heaven is prepared for him as his portion. The former is for a believer's use, the latter only is a believer's choice.

Every thing below is too base for the soul's *nobility*, and too brittle for the soul's *stability*. Who would set that vessel under the droppings of a cis-

tern, which is able to contain all the waters of the ocean?

A professor boasting of the world, is but like a bladder filled with wind. Those who set out at first like Judas, for the world, may be put off at last like Demas, with the world. 'Son, remember, that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.' These blossoms will fall off from all such spreading trees, when death comes to shake the boughs.

The world is too frequently got with anxious cares, kept with alarming fears, and lost with rending groans. We see the outside of the great estate, but not the inside of it. We behold the field of corn, but not the tares that are mixed with it. We do not always see the worldling's clouds and dark nights, but his clear day and sunshine. The riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, are like spreading but poisonous trees; and the devil shews us the fair leaves, and offers us the pleasant fruits, but conceals from us their deadly nature.

The world pretends to be a nurse; but those who draw her breasts will find in one the water of vanity, and in the other the wind of vexation. It is counted miraculous to find a diamond in a vein of gold; but it is more miraculous to find a pure and precious Christ in the bosom of an earthly Christian.

When we have the least of creature enjoyments, it is then our duty to bless God for them; when we have most of creature enjoyments, it is then our distinguished privilege not to bless ourselves in them.

The world does us infinitely more hurt by loving it, than it can possibly do us good by having it. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.* Ah, what a fool is he who would hazard a glorious *crown above,* for a single *crumb below !*

By how much the higher the morning larks are in their flight, by so much the sweeter are their notes. The higher a Christian is raised above the things of the earth, the more he is ravished with the joys of heaven. The least portion of grace is preferable to a mountain of gold. One ray of mercy is better than a sun of pleasure. One whisper of love from Christ's voice is worth more than all the symphony of nature. Give me that friend who lives for ever, and that wealth which lasts for ever.—May I make choice of those blessings which come freely, satisfy fully, and continue eternally !

Surely, every man walketh in a vain shew ; surely they are disquieted in vain ; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. Every carnal man walks in a vain shew, and yet how vain is he of his shew of vanity !

He is disquieted in vain, and it is only vanity which disquiets him. He labours all his life for the profit of riches, and yet in death his riches will not profit him. He that views an ox grazing in a fat pasture, concludes that he is but preparing for the day of slaughter.

Worldly enjoyments are but like hot waters, which, as some affirm, are soonest congealed in frosty weather. The greatest happiness of the

creature, is not to have the creature for his happiness. It is far better not to have the world at all, than to have our all in the world. Who would be like the raven, to feed upon the carrion of this execrated world, while there is a much wholesomer food for doves in the ark?

The world at best is but a looking-glass; there is a face presented by it, but there is no face seated in it. When you have sifted out its finest flour, it turns to bran.

Labour not to be rich. A strange paradox! If it were not for labour, who would be rich? and if it were not for riches, who would labour? But see what follows: *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* While riches are, they are not. They are not what they look like; they have not in them what we look for. But what are they not? They are not *durables*, but *moveables*. *For riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away, as an eagle towards heaven.* The gourd may flourish in the day, but it will wither at night.

The cup that now overflows with wine, may be filled up to the brim with water. When the sun of earthly happiness is in its meridian rays, it may be eclipsed. A man rejoices in health, and an ague shakes him; in honour, and a cloud shadows him; in riches, and a thief robs him; in peace, and a rumour disturbs him; in life, and death disappoints him.

The heavens at first had their dropsy, and then the old world was drowned. The heavens at last shall have their fever, and then the new world shall be burned.

The earth is big in our *hopes*, but little in our *hands*. It is like Sodom's apples, beautiful to the eye at a distance; but when they are touched, they crumble into ashes. *Riches avail not in the day of wrath.* Not in the day of man's wrath, to preserve him from plundering; nor in the day of God's wrath, to keep him from punishment.

Pleasures are but a shield of melting wax, against a sword of power: they can no more keep an evil conscience from tormenting, than a velvet sleeve can keep a broken arm from aching.

Fire, some people say, came down from heaven, therefore restlessly works itself through all combustibles, till it return thither again. *He that cometh from above, is above all.* Shall those who are so nobly descended, be so ignobly minded?

Do but see how the men of the world toil upon their hands and knees for the things of the world! There be many that say, *Who will shew us any good?* As if they could find a heaven in the trifles of earth.

That was a hard expression of a hardened worldling, 'Let God but give me enough of the earth, and I will never complain of the want of heaven.' Thus we see the curse of the serpent entailed upon the seed of the serpent. What God pronounces as a malediction, they take as a benediction.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. If a covetous man had been there, O how would he have catched the

promise out of the devil's lips, lest he should have gone back from his word!

Some are so enchanted with their golden bags, that they will ride post to hell, if they might but be well paid with golden wedges for their pains. All such covetous Balaams must fall by their own devices.

Covetousness is incompatible with the love of holiness. The excellent of the earth can see no excellency in the earth. This world is no better than a loathsome dunghill; upon which the wealthy stand crowing, and about which the poor are scraping: but if he alone be blessed who lives above the world, then those cannot be blessed who live in conformity to the world.

6. Another singular principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That duties can never have too much attention paid to them, or too little confidence placed in them.*

The Christian owes nothing to his corruptions, but their crucifixion. 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' Where God becomes a donor, man becomes a debtor. The debt of sin is mercifully discharged for him, that the debt of service might be willingly discharged by him.

Every created thing has its bounds; but grace has none. In true godliness there is no excess. Those wells which are of God's digging, can never be too full of water. He delights to see the trees of righteousness laden with the fruits of righteousness.

Though faith alone justifies the soul, yet that

faith which justifies the soul is not alone. Whatsoever trees are without their fruits, that also is faith without good works. In proof of sanctification, good works cannot be sufficiently magnified; but in point of justification, good works cannot be sufficiently nullified. The lamp of duty can only shine clearly as it is trimmed with the oil of mercy.

The most famous Roman pilots, when they have approached the shore, have quitted the bottom of merit, to sail in the bark of mercy; crying out, 'Our greatest safety is to rest only in the mercy of God.' The law of God is such a master, as to require the whole task of duty without mitigation; and the mercy of God is so good a benefactor, as to be capable of pardoning every transgression without limitation. He who ignorantly trusts in the former, will feel his angry sword; and he who, as lost and helpless, trusts in the latter, shall be enabled to touch the golden sceptre.

Most that perish, it is not their disease which kills them, but their physician. They think to cure themselves, and this leaves them incurable. Good works are so indigent, that no man can be saved by them; and yet so excellent, that no man can go to heaven without them.

It would be well for Christ's members, if it were with them as it is with skilful mariners, who have their eyes on the stars, and their hands at the stern. The self-righteous man is too prone to wrap himself in his religious duties: but this is making bad worse; for he who vainly thinks to wipe off old scores by his merit, does but increase his enormous debt.

'Now, we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped.' How shall any mouth be opened to plead guiltless, when God has stopped every mouth with its own guilt? It is in vain to stand up and plead innocence before him who is all eye; to see the blackest flesh under the whitest feathers; and the foulest heart under the fairest act.

Reader, though good works may be our Jacob's staff to walk with on earth, yet they cannot be our Jacob's ladder to climb to heaven with. To lay the salve of our services upon the wound of our sins, is as if a man who is stung by a wasp should wipe his face with a nettle; or as if a person should busy himself in supporting a tottering fabric with a burning fire-brand.

It is the greatest folly to expect profit from that which is unprofitable. Could we have done all that was commanded us, yet, without the mercy of God, all that we could have done would certainly undo us.

When the river fails us in its supplies of water, we then look up to the clouds for moisture. If Christ breathe not into our religious services, it is impossible to grow under them. That which is true in philosophy, is not always true in divinity. One says, 'That the purest elements have the least nourishment.' But by the doctrines of the other, the reverse is true.

It was not the tempered clay that cured the blind man, but Christ's anointing his eyes therewith. That was more likely, without him, to make a

seeing man blind, than a blind man see. Thus, though we may receive our spiritual sight in the ordinances, yet it is not the ordinances which give us sight.

It was not the troubling of the pool in Bethesda, that made it healing; but the coming down of the *angel* into it. That man must famish at last, who always feeds upon the dish instead of the meat.—There is no instruction to be got from the sun-dial of duty, except the Sun of Righteousness shine upon it.

Reader, it is dangerous for you to take shelter in your own righteousness; for the lightning of divine vengeance which flashes before you, and the curses of the law which thunder around you, may suddenly shake your house about you. As fast as you lay on your own plasters, a convinced and spiritual conscience will rub them off again. Nothing but the grace of the gospel can perfectly heal the wounds which a broken law has made. Though at the command of Christ you may let down the net; yet it is only by the blessing of Christ that you can enclose a profitable draught.

Carnal people walk by this principle: That much is too little for them, and that little is too much for God: but Christian people judge, that as they can never see God according to the greatness of majesty, so they can never serve him according to the greatness of his mercy.

When St. Paul wrote to Philemon, concerning his receiving his servant Onesimus again, he used this argument to prevail with him: 'Thou owest unto me even thine own self.' Thus man not

only owes his services, but also himself, to God. No man can merit a reward by paying his debts, much less can a sinner merit mercy by being an insolvent debtor.

The body of a man can as soon labour incessantly without food, as the soul of a Christian can live continually without ordinances.

St. Paul's religion was dearer to him than his life. *Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.* Jesus Christ laid down his precious life, to secure the possession of heaven for man; and shall man refuse to lay out his life, in pursuing the glories of heaven? Was heaven worth his passion; and shall it not be worth our seeking? Alas, what is *our sweat,* to *his blood!*

What could Jesus do more than die for us; and what can we do less than live to him? *To whom much is given, of them much shall be required.*

Can ye who are Christians find out all the good which has been bestowed upon you, or all the evil that has been forgiven in you? Such is his goodness, that he deserves infinitely more from you than he demands of you.

If heaven could be obtained by human endeavours, then *it* must either be of little worth, or *they* must be of great value. But he who puts an estimate upon all things according to their true value, has said, *When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.* We are not only unprofitable when all is to be done, but when all has been done. We are unprofitable to God, because he is necessarily and

eternally blessed without us; we are not profitable to ourselves, because without him we shall be everlastingly cursed in ourselves.

It is our bounden duty to live *in* obedience, but it will prove our utter ruin to live *on* obedience. Heaven is either the gift of mercy, or the reward of duty; if the latter, Christ is dead in vain; but if the former, we boast in vain. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Thus we see, that heaven is not the product of man's labour, but the token of God's good pleasure.

Many proud sinners will labour hard in the storms of life and hurricanes of death, rather than cry with Peter, *Lord, save; I perish!* But God is determined that every one shall die a malefactor, who dies without a mediator.

The dignity of good works does not lie in their merit, but in God's grace alone; for were he to examine and estimate them according to the rigour of the law, and separate from Christ, instead of their being valuable as refined gold, they would be as despicable as worthless tinsel. Our highest perfections are darkened with the blackest shades of imperfection. If Christ be not the foundation of our perfection on earth, he will not be the top-stone of our salvation in heaven.

Reader, what person would thank you for holding a candle to assist the light of the sun; or what prince would praise you for setting a rough pebble in his crown of precious diamonds? How then can it be supposed that those works which are pregnant with mischief, can be pleasing to God?

If man lay too much weight upon the pillars

raised by his own hands, he will pull the building upon his own head. God, who cannot lie, hath said, *So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy.* It is not of him that willeth, though it be never so heartily; nor of him that runneth, though it be never so hastily. Man's crown of glory is only made by the hand of God's mercy.

Man's working is not the cause of God's grace, but God's grace is the cause of his working: the creature may do something against grace, but he can do nothing without it. It is dangerous to hang the weight of eternity upon the slender wires of activity. The boundless life of felicity flows only from the bottomless love of the Deity.

7. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: *That those precious promises, which are given to insure his happiness, do not supersede those directions which are laid down for him to seek after happiness.*

Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. As those under the law were not without a gospel to save them; so those who are under the gospel are not without a law to rule them. There is the same impropriety in divorcing those who are united, as in uniting those who are divorced.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Continued gospel importunity, is the most powerful oratory. Man's importunity has no meritorious claim upon God; God has a right to the former, but we have no right to the latter. He who

enables us to *find* him, *enjoins* us to *seek* him. The Lord delights neither to see us *slothful* seekers, nor *doubtful* seekers.

He who refuses to *hear* the *voice* of Christ, shall never *see* the *face* of Christ. *He that saith, he abideth in him; ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* Then only does the watch of our lives move regularly, when the hand of mercy winds it up. The law condemns those as criminals, who lay claim to the *crown royal,* when they are not of the *blood royal.* Many would be like Christ in *bliss,* who would not be like him *by grace.* They are willing to have those promises which confirm them in happiness, but dislike those precepts which are to regulate their conduct.

The Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King; he will save us. Wheresoever the Lord is a *Priest* for *pardon,* he is a *Prince* for *dominion.* He is always a *Ruler,* where he is a *Saviour.* As Jesus Christ is the foundation of our happiness, so is he the fountain of all our holiness.

Reader, remember, if Christ be not a *refiner's* fire *in* you, he will be a *consuming* fire *to* you. *Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* Thus, if you refuse him to reign *over you,* he will refuse you to reign *with him.*

As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them. To tread in any other path on earth, is to miss your way to heaven. If the golden chains of love to God do not bind you to duty, the iron chain of darkness will bind you eternally. He

who abuses his liberty in one world, will for ever lose it in another.

Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life. To look upon a promise without a precept, is the high road to *presumption*; to look upon a precept without a promise, is the high road to *desperation*. One is like the cork in the net, to preserve it from sinking; and the other is like lead to the net, to keep it from floating.

A believer is like the mariner's compass; which is governed by the constant heavens, and not by the variable winds. Reader, will you make him a stone of stumbling, whom God has made a stone to build upon? Remember, the fire can consume the dross, as well as refine the gold. The strength of a rock is seen not only in supporting the house which is built upon it, but in breaking the ships which dash against it. The pillar of a cloud was as terrible in the darkness it occasioned to the Egyptians, as it was glorious in the light it gave to the Israelites.

Whenever Christ takes the burden of guilt from a sinner's shoulders, he then lays a yoke of obedience upon his neck. Though God can give a pardon to the greatest sin, yet he cannot grant a patronage to the least sin. To be lascivious, because God is gracious; what is this, but to drown yourself in that river, in which you should wash yourself? To live a life of gospel obedience, is the liberty of God's children; but to give your licentious appetite the reins, is the bondage of Satan's slaves.

That soul was never related to Christ, who was never devoted to Christ. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven.* Subjection to the will of God is not only a test of our present duty, but it is also an evidence of our future glory. To expect to see God in heaven, and not to seek him on earth, is as foolish as if a husbandman should throw his plough into the hedge, and then look for a rich harvest.

Sitting birds are the fowler's marks; while those which *soar* as the *eagle* are in safety. When men are out of the way of their worldly callings, it is easy to call them out of their heavenly way. God works *with* and *without* means. *With,* that man should not be *indolent;* and *without,* that he should not be *self-confident.* Jacob makes his prayers to an heavenly Father, and yet presents his gifts to an angry brother. David went out against Goliah in the name of the God of Israel, and yet repaired to the brook for his smooth stones.

The sword of Joshua must go with the prayers of Moses, and the prayers of Moses accompany the sword of Joshua. Had they fought and not prayed, they would have obtained no victory, because God will not be neglected: had they prayed and not fought, they would have obtained no victory, because he will not be tempted.

This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. He did not come by water without any blood, or by blood without any water. He came not to pardon and to leave the soul unpurged; or to purge and to leave it unpardoned. Where-

soever the death of Christ clears a soul from guilt, the spirit of Christ cleanses that soul from filth. A man may be justified without immediate glorification; but not without concomitant sanctification. The *law* by which God *rules* us, is as dear to him as the *gospel* by which he *saves* us.

Many would use faith as an eye to see with, but not as a foot to walk with. They look for the crown of victory, but are unwilling to fight the good fight of faith. That faith which sets men to oppose their internal enemies, sets God also to oppose their external adversaries. Prayer is the midwife of the promises. The promises are wells of comfort to the church, and believing prayer is the vessel to draw the water out of the wells.

8. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: *That it is dangerous dressing himself for another world, by the looking-glass of this world.*

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Let them be never so mighty, they are not to be feared: let them be never so many, they are not to be followed.

Satan's herd of swine is larger than Christ's flock of sheep. To infer that way to be the *truest* which is the *largest,* is to conclude upon the fineness of the cloth by the broadness of the list.

The innumerable crowds of people are too much like the droves of cattle which go to the slaughter. *Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.* The whole piece belongs to the devil; but God cuts off a remnant for himself. There are many birds of *prey,* to one bird of *paradise.* Pebbles lie abun-

dantly in the streets, when pearls are difficult to be found.

The scripture not only presents us with an account of the purity of those who shall be saved, but also with the smallness of their number. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* The Persians thought a crooked nose a great ornament, because seated on the face of their emperor: and the whole court would go awry, because such a neck was upon the shoulders of Alexander.

Great men's *vices* are more imitated than poor men's *graces*. The ill humours of the head may consume the vital parts of the body. Inferiors love to go the way which superiors are wont to go. The actions of their rulers, are too much the rule of their actions. Such people conceive by the eye, like Jacob's sheep, which brought forth their lambs suitable to the colour of the rods.

Those who follow after others in sinning, are in danger of following them in suffering. Alas, then the greatness of the multitude will not extinguish the flame. The number of those immortal faggots will but magnify the fury of the fire. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' It is not, many are chosen and few called, but many are called and few are chosen.

Sinners are certainly the greatest company, but they are also the worst company. Though the nature of believers be the greatest, yet their numbers are the smallest.

Flavus Vopiscus said, 'That all the names of the good emperors might be engraven on a little ring.' I will not say there are not any good men

who are great, but I will say, that there are not many great men who are good.

The trees of righteousness are thinly planted in the world's orchard. As in one righteous man there are many sins, so to one righteous man there are many sinners. 'Our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' The generality of persons will rather walk in the way that *most* people go, than in the way that the *best* go. They are like dead fish, which swim down the stream withersoever it runs; or like the water, which takes the figure of the vessel in which it is contained. But, *Vox populi* is sometimes *Vox diaboli;* that is, 'The voice of the people is sometimes the voice of the devil.' Whatsoever is engraven upon the seal, is imprinted upon the wax.

If we would not have the people of the world to be our *leaders,* we shall be sure to have them our *troublers.* If they cannot seduce us into an evil way, they will oppose us in a good way. If they cannot scorch us with their fire, they will try to blacken us with their smoke. They will speak evil of us, because we run not to the same excess of riot with them. Because we refuse to play the fool with them, they will say we are mad. Those who would arrive where the righteous now are, should be found in the road in which they once were. 'Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' What is the reason that there are so many scribbling professors in the world, but that they write after such imperfect copies?

The best of men are but men at the best. It is

better to imitate an evil man in that which is good, than a good man in that which is evil. St. Paul said, 'Be ye followers of me,' (but this exhortation hath its limitation) 'even as I am of Christ.' Where he follows Christ, there we must follow him: but if a Paul forsake Christ, we may forsake even Paul.

That was a good saying of Sir Thomas More: 'I will not pin my faith upon any man's sleeve, because I know not whither he will carry it.' Believers have not only infirmities which are natural, but they have also such as are sinful. Noah was no sooner delivered from a deluge of water, than he was drowned in a deluge of wine.

The failings of Christians do not flow from a want of grace, but from a weakness in grace; not from their depravity of spirit, but from the corruptions of the flesh. As they are not what they have been, so they are not altogether what they would be. Those roses which are now in blossom, shall hereafter be fully blown; and the stars which are yet concealed under a cloud, shall be seen in a clear sky.

Those are but suspicious Christians, who will take in all that believers do, upon the authority of believers. The comment must be followed no further than while it agrees with the text.

He is a rotten professor, who says in his heart, 'Why may not I be drunk as well as Noah, and commit adultery as well as David?' Did you ever hear of any who put out their eyes, because others were smitten with blindness? Or of any who cut off their legs, because others went on crutches?

But if you have sinned as David and Noah did, you should also *mourn* as they did. Their acts are not for our *imitation*, but for our *caution*. They are not land-marks to direct travellers, but sea-marks to warn mariners. If a man find a piece of gold covered with dust, will he preserve the dirt, and throw away the gold?

'You have heard of the patience of Job.' Yes, and of his impatience also. Instead of cursing the sin with which he was born, he cursed the day in which he was born.

You have heard of the meekness of Moses, and yet this even thread was not without its knots. While he is bringing water out of the rock, he is also fetching fire out of his own heart.

Peter not only forsook his Lord, but also forswore him. Who would ever have suspected, that he who had his name from an immoveable rock, should have proved such a shaken reed! Holy men may be good witnesses at the bar, but they are not always good judges on the bench.

Reader, if you turn not your back on Egypt, you may fall short of the land of Canaan.

It was formerly the complaint of a certain person, 'That the greatest thieves did execution upon the least.' But when God comes to pass sentence, he will bring every sinner to the bar. His laws are not like spiders' webs, that keep the little flies prisoners, but which the greater will break with smaller struggles. Then he will set the saddle upon the back of the right horse.

Though man may have many under him upon earth, yet he has one in heaven who is above him.

The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? Not, Where *wast* thou? but, where *art* thou? Oh how quickly hast thou mortgaged that inheritance, which I so lately settled on thee in paradise! *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* Because she put it into his hands, was that any reason why he should put it into his mouth?

The monsters of sin are so hateful when they are brought forth, that we are unwilling to own them ourselves; therefore we lay them at the doors of others.

The stable mountains are not so firm, but that they may be removed by fearful earthquakes. Those saints who have been as the greatest *stars* or *suns*, have at times had their sad eclipses.

9. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: *That wheresoever sin proves hateful, it shall not prove hurtful.*

What an apology doth a sorrowful Saviour make for his sleeping saints! *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Take a carnal man, and what he *can* do, that he *will not*; take a Christian man, and what he *would* do, that he *cannot*.

Now impotency shall be pitied, when obstinacy shall be punished. God has mercy for his own *cannots*, but none for the devil's *will-nots*. Adam's want was rather in his will than in his power; but a saint's want is rather in his power than in his will. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!* —A saint's will begins, where his work ends.

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. Lord,

I see, enlighten my darkness; I hear, but cure my deafness; I move, but quicken my dullness; I desire, but help my unwillingness; I remember, but remove my forgetfulness.

In playing over a tune upon an instrument, a single string may jar and slip, and yet the main be musical. It would be folly, indeed, to think our fields had no corn in them, because there is chaff about the wheat; or that the ore had no gold in it, because there is dross among it. In heaven there is service alone without any sin, in hell there is sin alone without service: but on earth, there is sin and service in the same man, as there is light and shade in the same picture.

Christian reader, to condemn your evil, is good; but to condemn your good, is evil. Here believers are like the Israelites, who in their darkest night had a pillar of fire; and in their clearest day, a pillar of a cloud. Above us there is light without any darkness; below us there is darkness without any light; but in this world, it is neither day nor night, but in the evening time it shall be light.

Though the lowest believer be above the power of sin, yet the highest believer is not above the presence of sin. It is in a living Christian that lust is to be mortified, but it is only in a dying Christian that it is to be destroyed.

When the body and the soul are separated by mortality, sin and the soul will be separated to eternity. Though a forced subjection be sufficient to satisfy a tyrant; yet it is only a ready obedience that proves homage to a king.

Sin never ruins, but where it reigns. It is not

destroying, where it is *disturbing*. The more evil it receives from us, the less evil it does to us. It is only a murderer, where it is a governor.

The rose is a fragrant flower, though it be surrounded with piercing thorns. The passover was a feast, though the Israelites ate it with bitter herbs.

There is always too much of the *wild* olive in those who are ingrafted into the *true* olive. Our graces are our best jewels, but they do not yield their brightest lustre in this world. The moon, when she shines brightest, has her spots; and the fire, when it burns the hottest, hath its smoke.

I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication. Who would have thought those prayers should ever have had any prevalency in God's ear, which were mixed with so much infidelity in the petitioner's heart?

Sin is an enemy at the Christian's back, but not a friend in his bosom. Although believers should be mournful, because they have infirmities; yet they should be thankful, because they are but infirmities. It is true, they have sin *in* them, and that should make them sorrowful; but it is as true, that they have a Saviour *for* them, and that should make them joyful. It is not the interposition of a cloud, but the departure of the sun, which constitutes a night.

Take the purest believer in the world, and you will find him fuller of sin than he is of prayer. There is too much of the earth in his most heavenly employments. But as Alexander's painter could find a finger to conceal the scar on his master's

face; so when Jesus Christ draws the picture of the saint's excellency, he can find a covering for all the scars of his infirmities.

The Saviour looks over that which is his own, and overlooks that which is his people's. Where there is no sin allowed by them, there shall be grains of allowance to them. He will not throw away his pearls, for every speck of dirt which may be on them.

Though Christ honours grace in its maturity, yet he owns it in its minority. *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Poor Peter had faith enough to keep him from drowning, but not enough to keep him from doubting. The least buds draw sap from the root, as well as the greatest branches. Though one star exceeds another in magnitude, yet both are alike seated in the heavens. Though one member of the body be larger than another, yet each hath an equal conjunction with the head.

The conduct of a Christian may sometimes be spotted with infirmity, when the heart is sound in the love of sanctity. Jacob halted, and yet was blessed. As his blessing did not take away his halting, so his halting did not keep away his blessing.

Hagar will have a room in Sarah's house, till death turns her out of doors. As death leaves the body soulless, so it leaves the soul sinless. *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* God doth not expect the cock to run with pleasant water, when there is none put into the cistern.

The heavenly Bridegroom will not put out a believer's candle, because of the dimness of its burning; nor overshadow a believer's sun, because of the weakness of its shining.

Though that vice may be found in us, for which he might justly damn us; yet that grace is to be found in him, by which he can easily save us. He comes not with water to extinguish the fire, but with wind to disperse the smoke.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: because the incense savours of the hand that offers it. Not only the wicked man's designs against the godly are sinful; but all his prayers to God are also hateful. Not so for the righteous; for, *the prayer of the upright is his delight.* If the vessel of the heart be clean, he will taste of the sweet wine which is drawn from it. *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

10. Another principle that a Christian should walk by, is this: *That inward purity is the ready road to outward plenty.*

That is but a hell-made proverb: *Plain dealing is a jewel; but he who adheres to it shall die a beggar.*

Though religion be against our ease, yet it is not against our interest. O what rich clusters of grapes hang all along our way to Canaan! Religion is so bountiful a master, that none need be afraid of becoming its servant. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all*

these things shall be added unto you. Our work below is the *best* done, when our work for above is the *first* done. He who has most of heaven in his heart, has not always the least of earth in his hand.

The young lions lack and suffer hunger. The old lions will have it for them, if it be to be had. *But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* As they would feel no evil thing within, so they shall want no good thing without.

He that freely opens the upper, will never wholly close the nether springs. There shall be no silver lacking in Benjamin's sack, while Joseph has it to throw in. Grace is not such a beggarly visitant, as will not pay its own way. When the best of beings is adored, the best of blessings are enjoyed.

While the rough Esau of this world hunts after the venison, the smooth Jacob shall carry away the blessing. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Why need a saint fear darkness, when he has such a sun to guide him? Or dread dangers, when he has such a shield to guard him?

O Christian, the God whom you serve is so excellent, that no good can be added to him; and so infinite, that no good can be diminished in him! He makes happy, and yet is not the less happy; he shews mercy to the full, and yet remains full of mercy.

Sinners look upon times of obedience as times of hindrance. They trust to their own toiling, and not to God's undertaking. They carry on such a

trade for the earth, as makes them miscarry in their merchandise for heaven. Though every rich man be not truly godly, yet every godly man is truly rich.

The sun can as easily diffuse its beams over the whole world, as upon a single field. What God receives from man, makes him no richer; and what man receives from God, makes him none the poorer. His goodness may be imparted, but cannot be impaired.

Christian reader, if the fountain be still running, why should you fear to fill your vessel? *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.* The sheep of Christ may change their pasture, but they shall never want a pasture. *Is not the life more than the meat, and the body than raiment?* If he grant unto us great things, shall we distrust him for small things? He who has given us heavenly beings, will also give us earthly blessings. The great husbandman never overstocked his own commons.

Jehu, who only served God in hypocrisy, had an external kingdom; and shall those who serve him from a principle of inward purity, be put off without a heavenly kingdom? If God valued counterfeit coin so much, how highly will he esteem the true gold! If he drop so much into a vessel of wrath, what will he do into a vessel of mercy! If he give so much to a bond-slave of hell, what will he do for a free-born child of heaven! *Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?* God was not a wilderness to them when they were in the wilderness. When they wanted bread, he gave them manna; when they wanted water, he

opened a rock; and though they had no new apparel, yet their old garments wore not out, but as their bodies grew, so their clothes grew. Thus they were never better off, than when they were ready to give up all as lost.

O how good is the believer's God, who not only *shortens* his pilgrimage *for* him, but also *sweetens* it *to* him! Had Christians too much of temporal things, they might care too little for spiritual things. Daniel appeared better with his homely pulse, than the Babylonians with all their royal diet. Some have rowed safely in a narrow river, and been drowned afterward in a large sea. A little is sufficient to him who with it enjoys God's all-sufficiency.

Naked godliness is so full a spring, that it will not let the Christian perish for want of water. *Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee!* (What then?) *Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.* Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth's unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God *for* his mercies, he is blessing man *with* his mercies.

Some are afraid of religion, because they suppose they shall lose all their *earthly mammon* while they are seeking *heavenly manna.* They think that piety is the greatest enemy to prosperity. Could they but reap profit by praying, they would be found more at prayer. Ignorant worldlings look upon gain as their greatest godliness, and not on godliness as their greatest gain. But a *golden plaster* is a poor application for a wounded con-

science. When the worm of carnality is gnawing at the root of religious performances, all the formalist's blooming hopes will fade, and die away at last.

Godliness is profitable to all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Who knows how many rich productions there are in the pleasure-garden of religion! There is mellow fruit in it for every day in the year.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments: wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever. All worldly gain, while we live, we may lose it; and when we die, we must leave it: but *in keeping God's commandments there is great reward.* There is a reward of God's approbation in life; of his confirmation in death; and of his complete salvation in glory.

In earthly services the master enjoys the profit; but in religious services the servant enjoys it. *And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom, the Gitite, three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom, and all his household.* The *ark* was not blessed for the sake of his household, but his household was blessed for the sake of the *ark.* The ark of God always pays for its entertainment, wheresoever it dwells.

Many will side with religion, while they can live upon it; and desert it when it must live upon them. But that saying is yet true; 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' It is only the Christian man, who is the truly contented man; and what are our enjoyments without content-

ment? What is a great possession, if wedded to great vexation? Wicked men make this world their treasure, and God makes it their torment. When they want estates, they are troubled for them; when they have estates, they are troubled with them; and when they would drink of the river, God disturbs the water.

Reader, if you know nothing of Christ, I wish you to remember, that when you come to die you will find religion necessary; and while you live, you will find it profitable. The purest honey is gathered out of the hive of holiness. The ways of iniquity are the ways of beggary. It is but reasonable that God should fall out with those in the course of his providence, who fall off from him in the course of their obedience.

In wisdom's right hand is length of days; and in her left hand riches and honour. Look to which hand you will, and you will find it full.

11. Another principle that a believer should walk by, is this: *That all the time which God allows him, is but enough for the work which he allots him.*

Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. Nature's womb sometimes proves nature's tomb.

With many it is ebb water, before the tide be at the full. The lamps of their lives are wasted almost as soon as they are lighted. The sand of their hour-glass is run out, when they think it is but newly turned.

When men feel sickness arresting, then they fear death is approaching. But we begin to die,

as soon as ever we begin to live. Every man's *passing-bell* hangs in his own steeple. Take him in his four elements, of earth, air, fire, and water. In the *earth*, he is as fleeting dust; in the *air*, he is as a disappearing vapour; in the *water*, he is as a breaking bubble; and in the *fire*, he is as consuming smoke.—Many think not of living any holier, till they can live no longer: but *one* to-*day* is worth *two* to-*morrows*.

Reader, you know not how soon the sails of your life may be rolled up, or how nigh you are to your eternal haven; and if you have not Jesus as your pilot within you, you will suffer an eternal shipwreck.

Poor soul, what will you do, if you begin to die naturally, before you begin to live spiritually! How will you look, if the tabernacle of nature be taken down, before the temple of grace be raised up! What must you feel, if your paradise be laid waste, before the tree of life be set in it! How can you bear to give up the ghost, before you have received the Holy Ghost? Eternal will be your darkness, if the sun of your life set within you before the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you. Woe be to you, if your body be turned into the earth, before your soul be fit to be taken into heaven. If the *second birth* have no place in you, the *second death* will assuredly have power over you.

One excellently compares our life to a day. *Infancy* is the day dawn; *youth* is the sun rising; *full growth* is the sun's meridian; and *old age* is the setting sun. By the light of the day, the Lord helps us to do the work of the day. *O that thou*

hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes! O how just is it, that they should miss of heaven at last, who never seek for heaven till the last! How reasonable is it, that God should deny them his grace to repent, who abuse his grace to sin!

It is a maxim, that every thing hath a principle to return to its own source. The rivers which have their eflux from the sea, have their reflux to the sea. Out of the dust man was formed, and therefore into the dust man will be turned. Aged reader, how much of your life is gone, and yet how little of God is known! How can you appear *before* God, if you are not found *in* God? Your being ancient in days, will be no plea for you before the Ancient of Days. If you have not Christ the hope of glory in you, you must have Christ the God of glory against you. If you partake not of what Christ has done, you will be eternally undone.

O you fresh picture of youth, how lovely will you appear, if hung up in heaven's palace! And will you spend your youthful life in following youthful lusts? Do you not know that the blossom is as subject to be nipped, as the flower to be withered; and the spark to be extinguished, as the flame to be consumed? Veins full of blood may be emptied by an accident, as soon as those that are leakish with old age. As there are none too old for eternity, so there are none too young for mortality. In Golgotha there are skulls of all sizes. Tell me, how will you live when you die, if you are dead while you live? Every step that

your body takes, is towards the earth: O that every step your soul takes may be towards heaven!

The vine that bringeth forth *no* grapes, shall be cut down as well as that which bringeth forth *wild* grapes. O how sad is it, to be taken out of the world before we are taken off from the world! *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* We have but a day wherein we are called to repent; and therefore, should repent while it is called to-day. He is the deafest adder, who stops his ears to the voice of the sweetest charmer. The Lord hath made a promise to late repentance, but he hath not made a promise of late repentance. If the heart of man be not now thawed, it may be for ever frozen.

A pardon is sometimes given to a thief at the gallows; but he who trusts to that, sometimes hath a rope for his wages. *Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* Man is such a purblind creature, that he cannot unerringly see a day before him. O see the end of one day, before you glory in the beginning of another!

Many man's days deceive him; they pass away like a shadow by moonshine, which appears longest when the moon is lowest. You may not have half a day to live, when you think that you have not lived out half your days.

The night cometh, wherein no man can work. The grave is a bed to rest in, but not a shop to trade in. There is no setting up under ground, for those who have neglected their souls above ground.

When the soul takes her flight from her loving mate the body, they shall meet no more till the great day of retribution. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!* Opportunities are for eternity, but not to eternity. Mercy's clock does not strike at the sinner's back. Where the means of grace are greatest, there they are often the shortest. You may be unhappy all your days, for despising the happiness of these days.

That was a sad cry of one: 'My life is done, but my work is undone.' *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.* Though the summer of life be but just opening, yet the winter of death is approaching: and how can you live in that winter, if there be no honey in your hive in this summer?

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. O young person, the sufferings of eternal death are but the consequence of your wilful contempt of eternal life. Methinks the worth of such a heavenly pearl as Christ should sparkle in your eyes. O that you may walk in the light of that sun, by the beams of which you may see your way to heaven! No disease is more fatal, than that which stimulates you to reject the restoring medicine. What a sad thing is it, that such mines of grace should be opened, and not a penny of this treasure fall to your share! Come, I trust you are are not gone so far in sin as to be beyond all hope of returning. A returning prodigal may yet meet with a welcome reception. The eternal Father is yet a tender father. He delights

to see a repenting prodigal; to hear a mourning Ephraim; and help a sinking Peter.

How much time has God bestowed upon man, before ever he has returned any of it to him again! It is good to have an ark prepared, before that deluge come in which you may be overwhelmed. Remember that God can as easily turn you into dust, as he could take you out of the dust. Delays are no more numerous, than they are dangerous. Before you can do good, you must be made good. For who will look for water from a drained river; or that sweet grapes should grow upon a withered vine?

For a man to make his soul's concern his last concern; what is this, but as if a husbandman should be putting in his plough, when he should be thrusting in his sickle? Know, O man, that there is but one heaven; miss of that, and where will you take up your lodging, but in hell! A vicious man's life expires like a tallow candle, leaving an ungrateful savour behind it; but a gracious man's life expires like a wax candle, that leaves a sweet perfume behind it.

12. Another principle that a Christian will walk by, is this: *That there can never be too great an estrangement from defilement.*

He who now gives way to the least sin, may be given up to the greatest sins. We are never far enough from lust, while we are on earth; or near enough to Christ, while we are out of heaven. A sound eye cannot endure the least spot. O, stand off from the devil's mark, unless you would be hit by his arrows.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. The closing in with the appearance of evil, is the first step to the accomplishment of the most enormous evil. A spark of fire will easily catch in a box of tinder. A picture in the glass may inflame, as well as the picture in the face. Little streams will find a passage to the great sea. Christian reader, restriction is a good chain to transgression. Why should you venture on slippery places, who can scarcely stand upon the firmest ground?

As faith is a grace that feeds all the rest, so fear is a grace that guards all the rest. That man who is the *most watchful,* is the *least sinful.* He may quickly be cast down by a sinful temptation, who is already prepared for it by a sinful occasion. Who will pity that man whose house is blown up with powder, if he keep his barrels in the chimney corner?

Such is the monstrous wickedness of men, that they use spurs and whips to that horse, which of itself rushes too fast into the battle. Though the streams and currents of their own lusts carry them too swiftly already, yet they hoist up sails to entertain the devil's winds. But such have a title good enough for hell, without so much trouble to make it surer.

The fowler spreads his net, but the wings of the bird carry her into it. Do you murmur for want of liberty, and yet surrender yourself to slavery? If you would not step into the harlot's house, you should not go by the harlot's door. If you would not gather the forbidden fruit, then beware how you look on the tree where it grows.

To pray against temptations, and yet to rush into occasions, is to thrust your fingers into the fire, and then pray that they might not be burnt. The fable saith, 'That the butterfly enquired of the owl, how she should do with the candle which had singed her wings? The owl counselled her, not so much as to behold the smoke.' If you hold the stirrup, no wonder satan get into the saddle.

The fort-royal of your souls is in danger of a surprise, while the out-works of your senses are unguarded. Your eyes, which may be floodgates to pour out tears, should not be casements to let in lusts. A careless eye is an index to a graceless heart. Remember the whole world died by a wound in the eye. The eyes of a Christian should be like sun-flowers, which are opened to no blaze but that of the sun.

To keep the eyes and not regard the ears, is as if a man should shut the casements of his house, and leave the doors open to the thief. The ear is an instrument that the devil loves to play upon. As your ears are joined to your head on earth, so they should be fastened to your head in heaven.

Your tongue, which should be tuned for God's glory, should not be turned to your own shame. By the striking of those clappers, we guess at the metal of the bell. *Thou art a Galilean; thy speech bewrayeth thee.* A soul without its watch is like a city without its wall, exposed to the inroad of all its enemies. We need a sun to dispel our darkness, and a shield to repel our dangers. The earth is not so apt to be over-run with thorns, as the mind would with sins, did not our great Gardener prevent their growth.

Those who would not fall into the river, should beware how they approach too near to its banks. He that crushes the egg, need not fear the flight of the bird. He who would not drink of the wine of wrath, let him not touch the cup of pleasure. He who would not hear the passing-bell of eternal death, should not finger the rope of sin. A person who carries gunpowder about him, can never stand too far from the fire. If we accompany sin one mile, it will compel us to go twain. It swells like Elijah's cloud, from the size of a man's hand to such an expansion, as to cover the whole sky.

Let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall. You will quickly lose your standing, if you are fearless of falling. He that abstains from no lawful thing, may soon be brought to commit something that is sinful. Many a man hath been thrown out of the saddle of profession, by riding with too slack a rein of circumspection.

Little sins are not like an inch of candle, which soon expires; but they resemble a train of powder, which takes fire from corn to corn, till at last the barrel be burst asunder. An honest matron will blush to be found in the dress of a wanton woman. Reader, will you invite that into the chamber of your heart, which brought Christ into the manger? Is your house so largely built, that you can afford that an harbour, which you know to be a traitor?

Having even the garment spotted by the flesh. Those garments which are defiled with the leprosy of sin, must either be cleansed by the priest, or burnt without the camp. If a sick man dislike the cup out of which he took his nauseous physic,

how should he refuse and abhor that which is filled with deadly poison! A believer disbands those auxiliaries, who have assisted his adversaries.

If Achan handle the golden wedge, his next work will be to steal it. If Ruth lie at the feet of Boaz, her next remove may be into his bed. If you take the devil's cup into your hand, it is to be feared that you will quickly lift it to your head.

13. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: *That whatsoever is temporally enjoyed, should be spiritually improved.*

All that a believer receives, is from the hand of divine bounty; and employed to the end of the divine glory. Others make an earthly use of heavenly things; but he makes a heavenly use of earthly things. God can put a golden bias into a leaden bowl, that it may run true to him who made it. The more he oils our wheels on earth, the swifter our chariots move to heaven. Grace can teach how to plume the wings of riches, and instruct us how to lay up that treasure in heaven, which comes out of the bowels of this earth.

There is a divine chemistry, which can extract the purest spirits out of the most gross and feculent matter. The beast on the altar differs not in kind from the beast at the slaughter. There is a lawful craft of coining our money over again, and adding the image and superscription of God to that which is Cæsar's. It is said of the philosopher's stone, that it turns whatsoever it touches into gold.

Whatever mill a saint has going in the world, he will spread the sails of it for the wind of divine approbation, that it may move round for God's

glory. When God sets him up above the world, then he holds up God to the world.

It is unequal, to be hot in our prayers, and cold in our praises. Many will cry aloud, *Give us this day our daily bread;* and whisper out, *Hallowed be thy name!* This is like opening our windows to admit the light, and then shutting them closely to keep out the sun. We too frequently lay our pipes to convey the water into our cisterns, and then turn the cock against the spring.

It cannot be praise-worthy to remember God in our necessities, and then forget him in our prosperity. His kindness is as proper a ground for praising him, as his promise is for praying to him. If under our miseries we can seek God with diligence; then under the weight of his mercies we should praise him with cheerfulness. Mercies are such gifts as advance our debts. It is as unpleasant to see a Christian in an ungrateful temper, as it is unnatural to see Pharaoh's *lean kine* in a fat pasture.

If God give us any enjoyment, it is for his own entertainment. Well may those hands reap the fruits, which set the plants. Is he not worthy to feed at that table, which his own hands have spread?—Where *former* blessings have been acknowledged, there *future* blessings shall be enjoyed. *He* shall never *want* mercy, who does not *wanton* with mercy. When man fights against God with his gifts, he fights against himself with his own sins.

Take a wicked man, and you will not find him led to God, by that which comes from God. He,

like the sea, turns the sweetest showers into the saltest waters. The greater substance he has from God, the less service has God from him. Like the moon, he is furthest from the sun when he shines with the greatest splendour. The more a dunghill has the sun-beams upon it, the more noisome is the effluvia arising from it.

Sinners, instead of having vials full of odours, have hearts full of evils. How many are there, who are highly above others in *false greatness*, and yet are greatly below them in *real goodness!* To turn from God while he is blessing them, is worse than to turn from him when he is smiting them.

Jesus answered, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father: for which of these good works do ye stone me? He shewed them his Father's goodness, and they stoned him for the goodness he had shewed. They were like Æsop's *snake*, which lay still in the frost, but stung him who laid it in his bosom. If it be a sin to return unto man evil for evil; what must it be to return unto God evil for good?

When we taste the generous wine, we should not forget the tree whereon the grapes grew. When we are refreshed by the rolling streams, it would be well to remember the spring from whence they arose.—A load of earth has crushed many a man to death. The richer some professors have been *without*, the poorer they have been *within*.

Notwithstanding the pious pretences of the Romish conclave, the Indians have brought more of the Spaniards to worship their gold, than ever the Spaniards brought of the Indians to worship their

God. The former have made more *infidels* than the latter have *Christians.*

Outward mercies to our bodies are divine baits, which are sometimes laid to catch our souls. God tries the vessel with *water,* that he may fill it with *generous wine.* Every stream leads an observant believer to the fountain-head. The more God's hand is enlarged in blessing him, the more his heart is enlivened in blessing God.

Where the sun of mercy shines hottest, there the fruits of grace grow fastest. In the book of nature, we may read the God of nature. The creature is like a tuned instrument, and the Christian's hand can strike it to the Redeemer's praise.

As a saint has an heart to seek God in what he has promised, so he has a hand to serve him with what he possesses. The greater the wages are which he previously receives, the better is the work which he performs. If he has five talents committed to him, he gets five more. If he has *one,* he improves *none.* The more a merchant adventures at sea, the greater are the returns expected at land. The tallest vines should always bear the sweetest grapes, because they lie most open to the sun. It is sacrilege to possess the largest crops, and return to God the smallest tythes of gratitude.

There is a requital of evil for evil, this is blameable;—of good for good, this is laudable;—of evil for good, this is abominable;—of good for evil, and this is admirable.

The April showers which invigorate the herbage and beautify the spring, do likewise bring forth many offensive croaking frogs.

Man should resemble the rivers, which, as they receive their rise from the sea, are restlessly returning to their source. Who is so unworthy of God's blessing as man? and who is so worthy of man's praises as God?

Beloved, we have not longer enjoyed the blessings of the earth, than we have abused them; which gives too much cause to fear, that though the child of mercy, like Jacob, has put forth his hand, yet the child of judgment, like Esau, may supersede him.

The devout Bernard observes, 'That ingratitude is a parching wind, which will dry up the springs of bounty, and dews of clemency.'

Man was formed the last of the creation, that he might contemplate upon God through every creature. Beloved, when you survey the spacious firmament, and behold it hung with such resplendent bodies; then think, that if the suburbs be so beautiful, what must the city be! What is the footstool he makes, to the throne whereon he sits! When you view the *evening star above you,* then reflect upon the *morning star within you.*

When you sit down at your table to meat, let this be your first course; how happy are all those who shall eat bread in the kingdom of Christ! Those are the rarest feasts, which are graced with the most royal guests.

When you see the winged travellers swiftly part the yielding elements, or the winding rivers hastening to their origin; then consider, how rapidly the little rivers of opportunity are pushing their way to the great ocean of eternity.

When you are decorating your body with the

varieties of art, then reflect how the eternal Word put on the rough suit of humanity. Think how Mercy undressed itself, to cover you with its garments!

When you take off your apparel, then remember, that you must put off this tabernacle. Be going to your bed, as if you were going to your grave; and so close your eyes in one world, as if you were immediately to open them in another.

When you behold your garden stored with trees, and richly laden with fruit, then contemplate upon the *great Husbandman* the *true vine*, and his believing branches. It cannot be so pleasant to see our orchards bearing fruits for us, as it is to God to see us bring forth fruit to him.

When you gaze upon the stately buildings, the shady groves, the crystal streams, the pleasant meadows, and all the pomp of wicked men; then think, if sinners go away with such large messes, what shall Benjamin's portion be! If the children of the concubines have such possessions, what shall be the inheritance of the children of promise! If the dogs fare so well beneath the table, how must the children fare at it! Give me that eye which can see God *in* all; that hand which can serve God *with* all; and that heart that can bless him *for* all.

14. Another principle that a Christian is to walk by, is this: *That he should speak well of God, whatsoever evil he receives from God.*

While the water is quiet, the mud lies at the bottom; but when it is disturbed, it rises to the top. Every *cock-boat* can swim in a shallow river;

but it must be a strong vessel that ploughs the troubled ocean. *The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* He gives before he takes, and takes but what he gives. The hour-glass of outward happiness soon runs out. To-day Job is the richest man in all the east, to-morrow Job is the poorest man in all the world; yet his heart was like a fruitful paradise, when his estate was like a barren wilderness. Though God burnt up his out-house, yet his palace was left standing.

Outward mercies are like the tide, which ebbs as well as flows;—like the sky, which sometimes is clear, and at another time clouded;—or like a budding flower, which a warm day opens, and a cold day shuts again. If God bless us in taking as well as in giving, let us bless him for taking as well as for giving.

That is a choice artist, who can play well upon a broken instrument. To be impatient with our affliction, and patient with our corruption, is to be angry with the medicine which heals us, and in love with the poison which kills us.

Beloved, it is sometimes in mercy to us that God removes outward mercies from us. He never wounds a saint to *kill* him, but to *heal* him. A gracious person once said, 'Though I am sometimes full of pains, yet I am at all times full of patience: I often mourn under my corruption, but I never murmur under my affliction.' Some can rejoice in any thing but Christ, and grieve for any thing but lust.

Too many think that God is cutting down the

tree, when he is but lopping off its luxuriant branches. They imagine that he is demolishing the superstructure, when he is only laying a right foundation. Poor souls, he is not nipping the flowers, but plucking up the weeds; he is not laying your land fallow, but ploughing the field; he is not putting out the light, but snuffing the candle. Providence hath a beautiful face under a black mask. God has the *fairest ends* in the *foulest ways.* The sheep may be dipped in the water to wash it, when there is no design in the good shepherd to drown it.

Christian reader, you may read the marks of a father in the stripes of his children. Every twig of the *black rod,* is but to draw his image upon you.—Could we but bury our friends alive, we should not mourn so much for them when they are dead. Did not the possession of the riches sometimes draw away our hearts, then the loss of them would not break our hearts.

Son of man, behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke. What, though he take a wife out of your bosom, so he take her into his own? You may embrace a creature till you kill it with kindness; and wither the sweetest flowers by smelling them too often. God doth but take that out of your hands, which would thrust him out of your heart.

He that mingles his passions with his afflictions, is like a foolish patient, who chews the pills he should swallow whole. He that carnally disturbs his soul for the loss of his substance, casts away the kernel because God hath taken away the shell.

If the tree yield us good fruit, it will be no very great loss, though the wind blow away the leaves. To bless God for mercies, is the way to increase them; to bless God for miseries, is the way to remove them. No good lives so long, as that which is thankfully improved; no evil dies so soon, as that which is patiently sustained.

God can make a plaster of a disease, and bring *soundness* to the *inward* man by the *sickness* of the *outward* man. If he stop up all your light, it is but to make you fairer windows. When the stars do not shine, the sun appears, repairing the loss of the smaller lights with brighter beams. In the loss of withered nosegays, you may smell at flowers fresh on the stalk. When Christians have their candles put out, they may fetch their light from the sun; and when they have their streams cut off, they may drink at the spring head.

The birds of paradise make the swiftest flight when they have the smallest feathers. These nightingales warble the most sweetly, when they set their breasts against the thorns. The creature often interrupts the respects which we owe to our Creator; and then no wonder if he break the cistern to bring us unto the fountain. Those who are found blessing God *under* all their losses, shall find God blessing them *after* all their losses.

15. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That the longer God forbears with the unrelenting sinner in life, the sorer he strikes him in the judgment-day.*

Divine patience is to be adored by all, and abused by none. Sinners usually take God's for-

bearance for their acquittance. Because they sin unpunished for a time, they imagine there is no punishment for sin in eternity. They forget that it is one thing to *forbear* the *debtor*, and another to *forgive* the *debt*.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Because the Lord continues to spare them, therefore they go on to provoke him. As he adds to their lives, so they add to their lusts. What is this, but as if a man should break all his bones, because there is a surgeon who is able to set them again?

Christian reader, you are greatly in debt to Divine Justice; but mercy stopped the awful arrest of vengeance. Many others have been taken from the earth by a sudden arrow darted from heaven. Adultrous Zimri and Cozbi unloaded their lives and their lusts at the same time.

Because justice seems to *wink*, men suppose her *blind;* because she delays punishment, they imagine she denies to punish them; because she does not always reprove them for their sins, they suppose she always approves of their sins. But let such know, that the silent arrow can destroy as well as the roaring cannon. Though the patience of God be *lasting*, yet it is not *everlasting*.

Believer, the sword of justice is dipped in the oil of mercy for your sake; and it dismembers some parts of your body, that the whole might not be destroyed.

He that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without re-

medy. God loves all men so as to *feed* and *forbear* them; yet he loves but few men so as to *forgive* them. He was *six* days in making the *whole world,* and *seven* days in destroying *one city.* Our garrisons are fairly summoned, before they are furiously stormed. If God's warnings are not sanctified to us, his vengeance will be executed upon us. It is sad for the iron to gather rust under the file.

Reader, remember, that if you be corrected, the Lord takes the scourge out of your own house. *I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not.* Many have the *space* of repentance, who have not the *grace* of repentance. But what follows? *Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.* Sinners may cast themselves upon a bed of *false hope;* but justice will cast them into a bed of *real torment.*

Mark how the long-slumbering arm of Deity awakes to the prey: *I have a long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.* The longer God is in fetching about his hand, the heavier will the blow be when it falls.

Security resembles a flash of lightning, which ushers in a clap of thunder; or it is like a profound calm at sea, which is generally succeeded by a dreadful storm.

Know, sinner, that God can dip his hand in your blood, and yet fetch out the stains.

He is pleased sometimes to shake your feeble

cottage before he throws it down; he often makes it totter before it tumbles. It may be a fair sunshiny season with you now, but a whirlwind may soon arise and dash you to pieces.

We pity a body that is going to the block; and shall we not pity a soul that is hastening to the bottomless pit? He dies the most comfortably, who lives the most heavenly. It is easier for a bird to avoid the snare, than to break the snare. The very beasts will shun the places where their own species have miscarried.

The rising sun in the morning was no proof that Sodom should not be entombed in its own ashes before the evening. That day which begins in prosperity, may end in adversity.

Attend to the charge which the King of heaven brings against the priests of Israel: *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee.* But what is the application of this? *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.* Justice proportions the sinner's smart to his fault; so that we may behold the greatness of the offence in the fitness of the punishment.

If the wicked turn not, he hath whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. The whetting of the sword is but to give a keener edge that it may cut the deeper. God is silent as long as the sinner will let him; but when the sword is whet, it is to cut; and when the bow is bent, it is to kill; and woe be to that man who is the butt.

Enraged justice will avenge the quarrel of abused mercy; for *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* It is a good thing to fall at his feet, but a fearful thing to fall into his hands. The stronger the enemy's arm is, the stronger will his blow be. Never did a weary traveller complain of being at his journey's end too soon. But a sinner, if he *die soon*, it does but *hasten* his torment; and if he *live long*, it does but *heighten* his torment.

Ah, what a sad vision is that, where the black horse of death precedes, and the red horse of wrath follows after! Needs must one fear come upon the back of another, when one death comes upon the neck of another.

Sinner, how fearful is it to be preserved from small, and reserved for great evils! The higher you are raised, the greater will be your fall. You may wonder more at the divine indulgence which has so long reprieved you, than at the Almighty vengeance which so soon overtakes you. You were dry enough for eternal flames, when you were wrapped in your swaddling bands: for *you were by nature a child of wrath, even as others.* All who draw their first breath in corruption, deserve to draw their second in destruction. It is a wonder that he should add to our days, when we are adding to our sins.

God has his vials of wrath filled with indignation, for those who are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. If his long-suffering does not draw the sinner to repentance, his severity will drown him in desperation. O sinner, either seek a Sa-

viour to deliver you from the wrath of God, or else find a shoulder to bear you up under the wrath of God.

16. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That there is no judging of the inward conditions of men by the outward dispensations of God.*

The greatness of our estates is no argument of the goodness of our hearts. To prize ourselves by what we *have,* and not by what we *are,* is to estimate the value of the jewel by the golden frame which contains it. Grace and gold can live together; but the smallest degree of the former in the heart, is preferable to a chain of the latter about the neck.

That old complaint may justly be revived: *Bonis male, malis bene.* Here it is sometimes evil with the righteous, and well with the wicked. Those who live most upon God, fare worst from the world.

Under the law, the dove was preferred in sacrifice to the swine. Riches are called thick clay. They are more likely to weaken the back than strengthen the heart.

No man can know love or hatred by any thing that is before him. You cannot read the wrath of God in the black lines of adversity, or the love of God in the white lines of prosperity.

God often wrings out the waters of a full cup to wicked men, though there be dregs at the bottom. They may be fruitful vines, and yet only laden with sour grapes. It is seldom that the sparkling diamond of a great estate is set in the golden ring of a converted heart.

Riches have made many good men worse, but they never made any bad men better. Thus if we discern but a spark of grace in a nobleman, we cry it up as a blazing comet, and speak of it in the superlative degree.

Though a Christian be made happy *in* the world, yet he is not made happy *by* the world. Give me those judgments which give birth to mercy, rather than those outward mercies which give birth to judgments. There are many who are temporally happy, who will be eternally miserable; and many are now temporally miserable, who will be eternally happy.

If indigence could procure heaven, how many poor people would then be saved; and if wealth could free a man from hell, how very few of the rich would be damned! The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of the cross. Those who attempt to take the cross from the Christian's shoulders, do in effect aim to remove the crown from his head.

He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. The sun of prosperity shines upon the dunghill as well as upon beds of spices. The rain of adversity falls upon the fruitful garden as well as upon the barren wilderness. The abundance of the infidel is as a golden chain to bind him to the earth, and the apparent miseries of the believer are as fiery chariots to convey him to heaven.

And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up: yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. God's jewels may here be trodden under foot, but hereafter they will be fixed in the royal diadem. If we look for a

saint, he is not always to be found upon a bed of down, but sometimes he has been seen upon a heap of dust. *Poor* Lazarus rises to heaven, and *rich* Dives sinks to hell.

Benjamin was not the less regarded by Joseph, because the silver cup was discovered in his sack. We must not infer the absence of God's affections from the presence of numerous afflictions. Though the north wind may chill us, yet the beams of summer can soon revive us. Those stones which are designed for the building, are frequently wounded by the chisel; while those which are neglected, lie in ruinous heaps.

A saint is glorious in his misery, but a sinner is miserable amidst all his glory. We must not therefore think evil of religion, though we should behold a Joseph in the *prison,* while a Pharaoh is in a *palace;* or a Job on the *ground,* while a Julian is on a *throne.* The most curious pearls are often enclosed in the most rugged shells. *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* Those who judge of a man's real greatness by his apparent grandeur, are unfit to sit upon the bench. That apple has not always the soundest core, which has the fairest skin.

The tinsel glare upon a sinner is too apt to offend the weak eyes of a saint. Alas, why should he envy him a little light, who is to be shrouded in everlasting darkness? Why should we throw bludgeons at those boughs, which are only laden with poisonous fruits?

Deliver my soul from the wicked, who have their portion in this life; whose belly thou fillest with thy

hid treasure. The things of the world are the only happiness of the men of the world. None of their flowers grow in paradise. They are *anxious* for the *creature,* and *indifferent* about the *Redeemer.*

A man's estate in this world may be great, and yet his state for another world may be fearful. God may say to him as to Pharaoh, *For this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power upon thee.* The same hand which now pours abundance on ungodly men like oil, will soon pour down wrath upon them like water. *Under* all their *wealth,* their hearts are *sinful;* and *after* all their riches are *fled,* their *situation* will be *doleful.* It is far better to pass through the valley of Baca to Zion, than to pitch our tents in the plains of Sodom.

Luther's expression was not the less true because it was homely: 'The whole Turkish empire is but a crust, which God threw to the dogs.' One said, 'I would rather have Paul's coat, with his heavenly graces, than the purple robes of princes, with all their kingdoms.'

Lest riches should be accounted evil in themselves, God sometimes gives them to the righteous; and lest they should be considered as the *chief good,* he frequently bestows them on the wicked. But they are more generally the portion of his enemies, than his friends.

Alas, what is it to receive, and not to be received? to have none other dews of blessing, than such as shall be followed with showers of brimstone? We may compass ourselves with sparks of security, and afterward be secured in eternal

misery. This world is a floating island, and so sure as we cast anchor *upon* it, we shall be carried away *by* it.

God, and all that he has made, is not more than God without any thing that he has made. He can never want treasure, who has such a golden mine. *He* is enough without the creature, but the *creature* is not any thing without him. It is therefore better to enjoy him without any thing else, than to enjoy every thing else without him. It is better to be a wooden vessel filled with wine, than a golden one filled with water.

17. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That it is safest to cleave to that good which is the choicest.*

There never was one who thought he had made a bad market, by selling all for the *pearl of great price.*

Lord, to whom shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life. Peter knew that a soul who was *changed*, was not for *changing*. There cannot be a better being for us, than for us to be with the Lord: and shall those who have forsaken *all* to follow him, forsake him again to follow *nothing?*

Reader, you cannot tread in the steps of Christ, without drinking of the cup of Christ. The nearer you are to such a spring, the clearer will your streams be. When every other *gourd* is withered, he will prove a refreshing shelter.

How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. David was *least*

alone, when he was *most* alone. His heart was like the needle in the compass, which always inclines to the northern pole. Believers are desirous of leaving their hearts with God one day, that they may find them with him another day.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Let a believer search heaven and earth, yet he can find nothing comparable to God: and indeed he must be a conjuror at discovery if he could. As Judah said of Jacob, 'His life is bound up in the life of the lad;' so say I of a Christian, his life is bound up in the life of God. To be near to him in happiness, is to draw near to him in holiness.

Many unstable professors may justly be reflected upon. They will readily attend an *applauded* Christ, but will hastily desert a *crucified* Christ; but a true Christian is as willing to follow him to the *cross*, as to the *throne*. He has no desire to turn like a shadow from him, in whom there is no shadow of turning.

As there is no natural good in us to lead us to God, so there is no evil without us that shall finally draw us from him. Who but an idiot would address a picture instead of a person; or prefer a shadow to a substance? There is nothing can do us so much good as God's presence, or so much evil as his absence.

It is far better to part with a thousand worlds for one Christ, than with one Christ for a thousand worlds. How dreadful is their darkness who live in the absence of such a sun!

Reader, every step you take to Christ, is a step

towards heaven; and every step you take from him, is a mortal step towards hell.

And he was sorrowful at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. This poor rich man, or rather, this rich poor man, came hastily to Jesus, and ran heavily from him. If he may not enjoy God and mammon, he will leave God for mammon. One was for selling all, but the other for saving all. Ah, what false balances are those, which will make corruptible silver outweigh an incorruptible Saviour!

The prince of darkness employs the men of the world to *draw* us from God, and the things of the world to *keep* us from God. Truly that good was never worth seeking, that is not worth keeping.

Reader, is it not a fault to depart from that God, in whom there is no fault? As Saul said to his servants, *Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?* So say I to sinners: Can sin, satan, or the world, do that for you, which God can? It is only the best of beings, who can convey the best of blessings. None but that God who has the keys of heaven, can open the gates of heaven. By him we obtain admittance into the celestial inheritance.

What is our life but a warfare; and what is the world but a thoroughfare? Know, sinner, if you reject the Saviour, you despise grace, which is the fairest jewel on earth; and glory, which is the brightest sun beyond this life.

No set of men are in greater danger of losing the life to come, than those who are contented with the present. A drop is more easily dried up than

a river; and a spark sooner extinguished than a flame.

What powerful constraints does our God lay upon us to seek his friendship! *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* It would be better for us to leave all behind, than that he should leave us behind. It is not the brightest star that can constitute day, when the sun is set; nor the thickest cloud that can make a night, if it be risen.

18. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: *That no present worldly business should interrupt his pursuit of future blessedness.*

Solomon says, *All the labour of man is for his mouth.* Though he says it *is* so, yet he does not say it *should* be so. This would not be for a heathen to commence Christian, but for a Christian to become a glutton.

That hawk which follows the world's prey, is in danger of falling into God's snare. Why should I lay out that time in seeking *pebbles,* which may be better employed in search of *jewels?* What God bestows on some men as a temporary pension, they embrace as their only portion. Such foolish travellers are so taken up with the inn, as to forget the end of their journey. They may indeed sow this seed, but it will produce nothing but wormwood.

Outward mercies are not so mean as to be totally neglected; nor so great as to be primarily desired. If they be *seducements from* the mercy-seat, they will prove *indictments at* the judgment-seat.

I may say of the *earth,* as a philosopher said of *Athens,* 'It may serve for a transient lodging, but

not for a constant dwelling.' Outward plenty may be a comfortable ship for indigence to sail in; but it is a dangerous rock for confidence to build upon. Give some people the earth in their hands, and they care not who has heaven in his heart.

When Crates threw his gold into the sea, he cried out, *Ego perdam te, ne tu perdas me.* That is, 'I will destroy you, lest you should destroy me.' Thus, if the world be not put to death here, it will put us to death hereafter. Then we shall say, as Cardinal Wolsey, when discarded by his prince, and abandoned to the fury of his enemies: 'If I had served my God as faithfully as my king, he would not have thus forsaken me.' Poor man, all the perfumes on earth are unable to prevail over the stench of hell.

It would be well for Christians, could they say, as Erasmus: 'I desire riches no more than a feeble beast wishes for a heavy burden.' *Cares* are bound to *crowns.* Anxiety disfigures the face of prosperity, and renders it like a crystal glass blown up by impure breath. A body laden with cares, and a soul laden with spiritual fruits, cannot well unite together. Those who die *trifling* with *salvation,* will after death *tremble* under the pains of *damnation.*

I have heard of a woman who, being busied to save her goods when her house was in flames, forgot her child; but the child being soon after inquired for, she cried out, 'O my child, my child!' Thus will many thoughtless sinners, in a worse fire, cry out, 'O our souls, our souls!' Poor Sisera was not much better for the *milk* and *butter,* when he so soon after felt the *nail* and the *hammer.*

Ah! how careful are men of their outward, and how careless about their inward concerns! In a vigourous body there is a vicious soul. The evil disposition of the latter spoils the good composition of the former.

For a man to be attentive to his flesh, and inattentive to his spirit; what is this, but as if a husbandman should gather in his stubble, and leave his corn behind? or as if a goldsmith should weigh his dross, and cast away his gold?

Reader, will you curiously *trim* your *scabbard*, and let the costly *sword* decay with *rust?* This would be like Jacob, to lay the right hand upon the younger, and the left hand upon the elder. If there be nothing done *in* your soul on earth, there will be nothing done *for* it in heaven.

It is truly lamentable that the soul, which received its being *from* God, should be excluded from a being *with* God.

19. Another principle that a believer should walk by, is this: *That gospel integrity towards God is the best security against wicked men.*

Surly mastiffs, which have no teeth, may bark, but they cannot bite. Who would fear the hissing serpent, if he knew it had no sting? A naked man with innocence, is preferable to Goliah with his coat of mail.

And who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? As no flattery can heal a bad conscience, so no cruelty can wound a good one. As the ways of God have happiness connected with them, so sufferings for the sake of God have honour annexed to them. A pious martyr has more renown than a bloody persecutor.

Integrity may not keep us from *supposed* infamy. The choicest professors have had their black marks in the world's calendars. But though it may not keep us from being shot at, yet it will preserve us from injury. *The Lord taketh my part with them that help me; therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.* God will either find a *shield* to *ward off* sufferings, or a *hand* to *sustain* us under them. Though the Christian be as a sheep among wolves, God can save him from being *rent* by them; or as a ship amidst waves, he can keep him from being *overwhelmed* by them. Let us not, therefore, *bury* a church before she is *dead.* It is time enough to put on *mourning,* when God invites us to her *funeral.*

For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Thus, whether he pluck up the tares, or let them stand, it is only for the sake of his people. Noah was *sound* in the *faith,* when all the earth was polluted; and he was *saved* in the *ark,* while it was *deluged.*

Upon all the glory shall be a defence. There is nothing but *the glory* worth keeping; and there is none of *the glory* that shall be wanting. The shields of salvation are not hung up in the way of transgression. All the wiles of hell cannot conquer a single soldier in Christ's camp, much less rout his whole army.

The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, both for *sublimity* and *security.* When Christ is our harbour, we

may safely run our vessels into so desirable a retreat.

A garden enclosed, is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. As God numbers the *hairs* of his people, he must needs preserve their *heads.* He has a strong hedge of *protection for* them, when their enemies would break in *upon* them.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Here is a *dangerous voyage,* but a *safe convoy.* God never deals with *his* friends as we do with *ours.* We serve them too often as we do *dials;* which we only look upon when the sun of prosperity shines; or as ladies do with flowers, who, while they are gay, place them in their bosoms; but when they fade, cast them away. But when our want is greatest, God's help is nearest. The more grievous our oppression, the more glorious is our deliverance.

When our misery is most powerful, then the Lord's mercy is most visible. When our night is the darkest, our day is the clearest. When our ebb is the lowest, our flood is the highest. *As our tribulations abound, so our consolations much more abound.*

When God's benignity is most admired, our calamity is more easy endured. Israel often slumbers and sleeps; but He that *keepeth* Israel does neither. Thus we may boldly say, 'If God be for us, who shall be against us?' Against us they

may be, to *hate* us; but against us they shall not be, to *hurt* us.

Noah rides safely in a well-pitched ark, while the old world is drowned. When Israel is led captive, Jeremiah is set at liberty. The prophet found more favour from the princes of Babel, than from the people of Israel. Gideon's fleece was wet, while all the earth was dry. Thus will God always preserve integrity, and punish vanity. His grain is often gathered into the garner, before he comes to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

20. And lastly, a Christian will walk by this principle: *That the richness of the crown that shall be received, shall more than compensate for the bitterness of the cross which may here be endured.*

The last wine that Christ draws, is the best wine that Christians drink. When the waters cover the earth, whither should dove-like spirits fly, but to the ark of Christ? He who *left* heaven to make them *righteous*, will *come* from heaven to make them *glorious*.

For ye had compassion on me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods; knowing in yourselves, that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring substance. O how did the glory of their heavenly mansions outshine all the glare of their earthly possessions!

Christian, you are now on a troubled sea; do not say that you shall never arrive at your sure resting-place. What, has God plucked you out of the *fire of destruction*, and will he leave you in the *water of affliction?* In a small moment you will cheerfully sing, 'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the

earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come.' The blessed Sun of righteousness will shine clearer, when these clouds are blown over. If there be so much liquor in a single grape, what must there be in the whole cluster!

Take a believer while he lives, and God has a servant the more on earth;—take him when he dies, and God has a servant more in heaven.

Christian! you must never look for an end to your sorrows, till you see an end to your sins. As the former came not a day before the latter, so they stay not a day behind them. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* Well may you bear the rod, when infinite love makes it up, and lays it on. When you lie under his afflicting hand, you then lie near his affected heart. Rake a *dunghill,* and its effluvia will be *offensive;* but beat *perfume,* and its scent will be *grateful.*

I have read of a fountain that is cold at mid-day, and warm at midnight. Thus are saints frequently cold in the mid-day of prosperity, and warm in the midnight of adversity. Afflictions are not a *consuming,* but a *refining* fire to the godly. They are like the thorn at the nightingale's breast, which rouses and puts her upon her delightful notes.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed by us. These fall as far short of glory as the smallest fraction does of the largest sum; or as the least filings of gold do of all the riches of India. If the faint glimmerings of Christ's face overpower the pains of the cross; what must the full meridian of his glorious light do!

For our light afflictions, which are but for a

moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Ah, how light is a dram of reproach to a weight of glory; and how short a moment's pain, to an eternity of pleasure!

He should not be weary of the *cross*, who is sure of the *crown*. After the cup of affliction, then comes the cup of salvation. The *wine-press* prepares for the *wine-cellar*. The painful throes of travail are soon forgotten in the fond embraces of a tender babe.

Sour fruits require something to sweeten them. Death is grateful to no creature, but it is profitable to every Christian. Our good physician will not continue us a moment longer in his infirmary than is necessary. Our refiner regards his choice gold too much to consume it in the flames.

Those who are patient in the seed-time of sorrow, shall soon reap the glorious harvest of unfading joy. We may converse concerning our future greatness, but we shall never know the weight of the crown, till it be placed on our heads.

Come, O Christian, be of good comfort; though the cloth be cut, it is only to make it up into a curious garment. The hewing of the timber is only to prepare it for the structure. The new corn that lives in summer, is produced from the old corn that died in the winter. It is neither commendable to rush into the arms of death, contrary to the dictates of reason; nor to fly *from* them when God calls us *to* them.

Shall Jesus come down from heaven to die for you, and will you be unwilling to ascend from earth to heaven to live with him? A saint's reluctancy

to meet death arises from his apprehension of unreadiness to meet him. A pardon may have passed the prince's seal, that is not put into the prisoner's hand. The edge of this sword has been blunted ever since it was sheathed in Christ's side.

After the vessel has endured the storms, it will arrive at the haven. Though the Christian's triumphs never end, yet, blessed be God, his trials shall soon end. When his body and soul shall part asunder, then God and his soul shall meet together.

Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. Suppose the lancet make a deep incision, it is only to reach the depth of your wound, and render the cure more complete. Health is most acceptable, after sharp sickness; and liberty, after the most rigorous bondage. Sailors always triumph at the appearance of land, after a long and tedious voyage. All the grapes in Christ's vineyard must pass through the wine-press.

However pleasant a sinner's beginning may be, his end is destruction; and however troublesome a saint's beginning may be, his end shall be honourable. The fresh rivers of carnal pleasures run into the salt sea of desperation; but the wet seed-time of a religious life ends in the blessed harvest of a peaceable death.

When Crœsus inquired of Solon who the happiest man was, he answered, 'One Tellus, who lived a sober life, and died at last fighting for his country.' Christian, was he happy in living and

dying for his country? and shall you be miserable, who live and die for your Christ?

When Adrianus asked how the Christians could so patiently endure the tortures he had inflicted? they answered, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, and the love of heaven encourages us.' Those who are born blind cannot judge of the glories that dazzle the eyes of angels. One smile from God's face will for ever dry up all the tears from the saint's eyes.

As fishes dropping out of a narrow brook into the large ocean do not lose, but enlarge their element; so when the godly leave the church militant, they do not forsake, but increase their blessedness. As the flames of a burnt-offering ascend to heaven, while its ashes fall to the ground; so the soul of a saint rises to glory, while his body falls into the dusty grave.

HAVING thus digested the twenty singular principles by which a believer walks; I lastly come to give directions to those who wish to do more than others. And here I shall stud your golden ring with seven precious diamonds. Would you, therefore, *do* more than others? then *deny* yourselves more than others;—would you deny yourselves more than others? then you must *pray* more than others;—would you pray more than others? then you must *resolve* more than others;—would you resolve more than others? then you must *love*

more than others;—would you love more than others? then you must *believe* more than others;—would you believe more than others? then you must *know* more than others;—and would you know more than others? then God must *reveal* himself more to you than he does to others.

1. Would you *do* more than others? *then deny yourselves more than others.*

Either *self* must be laid aside, or God will lay *us* aside. What can any true Israelite behold in this Dagon, that the ark of God should bow before it?

Though *self-seeking* had its birth in heaven, yet being justly cast out, it can never find its way thither again.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. This is the very basis of our profession. *Sinful self* is to be destroyed, and *natural self* is to be denied.

A *little* will serve a man who is *strong* in grace; *much* will but serve him who is *weak* in grace; but *nothing* will do for him who is *void* of grace. As we are called to lay out all in the cause of God, so we are to lay down all at the call of God.

2. Would you *deny* yourselves more than others? *then you should pray more than others.*

Our daily bread calls for our daily prayers; because one want is created, while another is supplied. Are we called *by* the name of Christ; and shall we not call *upon* the name of Christ? Take away spiritual breath, and you take away spiritual life. There never was one *new-born,* who was *still-born.*

Who would not stretch out a beggar's hand, to receive a jewel of infinite value? With what bold-

ness should those appear at court, who are sure of the king's ear!

Spiritual prayer resembles Noah's dove, which returned with an olive branch. Prayers were never rightly offered to God, but they were quickly answered. We are as much bound to pray while on earth, as angels are to praise while in heaven.

He who would speed in his enjoyment, should plead for the attainment. The prayerless soul is a fruitless soul. The waters of life are sweet; and it is blessed to bring the vessels of prayer to these wells. Throw a dry spunge into the river, and it will soon fill itself with water.

Many will cast off this duty, because they are ashamed to go to it with crutches: but these wants of accomplishment should not be a discouragement; for many dumb beggars have been relieved at Christ's gate, by making signs.

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glittering. Christ had the bright sunshine of his Father's affection, when he was moving in the orbit of supplication.

Reader, is not that mercy worth your breath, which was worth a Saviour's blood? Why should we cease petitioning, while God continues granting?

Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? Thus may you pray: *Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go comfortless?* Believing prayer is a traffic for those commodities which are only locked up in heaven's storehouse. Why should we be *dumb*, seeing God is not *deaf?*

By fasting, the body learns to obey the soul; by praying, the soul learns to command the body.

No Christian has so little from Christ, but there is ground for praise; and no Christian has so much, but he has need of prayer. Every day we find it is a *great* work to accomplish a *little* work. Every new act of obedience requires fresh assistance.

Ask, and receive, that your joy may be full. Spiritual supplication is a channel to consolation. Now none are more fruitful in divine labour, than those who are most joyful under a sense of the divine favour. Death *shortens* our way to heaven, but that *sweetens* our way to heaven.

A neglect to nip the flowers, does but increase the growth of the weeds. A small vessel with smart gales, will sail faster than a large ship with small winds. I never expect that branch to bear any fruit, which receives no sap from the vine. When prayer mounts upon the wing of fervour *to* God, then answers come down like lightning *from* God.

The *gift* of prayer may have praise from men, but it is the *grace* of prayer which has power with God. A few grapes prove the plant to be a vine, and not a thorn. Though prayer be God's due, as a Creator; yet it is more truly performed, when offered to him as a Father. Though none can pray aright but *new creatures*, yet all ought to pray because they are *creatures*.

Christians can never want a praying time, if they possess a praying frame. In the morning, this is a golden key to open the heart for God's service; and

in the evening, it is an iron lock to guard the heart against sin.

Peter was therefore kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. This fetched an angel out of heaven, to fetch him out of prison. Their prayer went up like fire, and brought down blessings like water. It is not always that hound which opens the loudest, that catches the hare; but that which follows closest in the chase.

Believers should not only pray one with another, but one for another. Next to the breach of piety in religion, we should abominate the breach of charity in communion.

Reader, when the vessel of your soul has given over sailing, we may conclude the divine winds have given over blowing. He who is omniscient to know your wants, is also omnipotent to grant your request. Are you made a spiritual priest, and will you refuse to offer up spiritual sacrifices? Your affections should soar like an eagle, when your lips cannot move faster than a snail.

Pray without ceasing. We may pray continually, and yet be not continually at prayer. Though the lesson is not always being played, yet it is well to have the instrument in tune.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. That soul shall have his will of God, who desires nothing but what God wills. Why should our petitions be dying, when our Intercessor ever liveth? Is it of any consequence how often we carry our empty vessels to such a well?

The intercession of Christ is a golden censor; but he will not admit our prayers to be incense. Luther once said in prayer, 'Our Father, let my will be done on earth, as in heaven; for thy will is mine.' The covenant of grace turns precepts into promises; and the spirit of grace converts promises into prayers.

Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord; and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.

God is always willing for us to hit the mark, when he directs our arrows. When he teaches us to wrestle, he then intends we should prevail. Spiritual breathings are attended with spiritual blessings. Nothing will ascend to heaven, but what came down from heaven. That prayer meets with no answer, which is not offered up in faith.

3. Would you *pray* more than others? *then resolve more than others.*

God looks more at our wills, than at our works. The first-fruits of conversion hang upon the trees of holiness. *I will arise, and go to my Father.* Arrows weakly shot, fall short of the mark.

Shame is that which ambitious nature abhors, and danger is what timorous nature declines. Reformation is an icy path, and cowardly spirits love to have it well beaten by others, before they will venture to tread it.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Firm resolutions are like rocks, which the waves cannot move. By our prayers we shew what we wish God to do for us; and by our purposes we

manifest what we desire to do for God. By the illumination of God the Spirit, the understanding conceives holiness; the will resolves on holiness; and the life produces holiness.

I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Till we attain to strong resolutions, we shall not be conquerors of satan's strong temptations. As diseases resort most to that part of the body which is weakest, so the devil's attacks will be most frequent where he is likely to be most prevalent. The law's curse is only the press-money of a servile spirit, but the love of God is the bias of a volunteer.

The resolutions of a Christian are like the water of a fountain that flows of itself; but the resolutions of a sinner resemble the water of a pit which must be forced up by artificial engines. Some never form resolutions, but under heavy afflictions: such are like goats, which never yield any milk till they are stung; or like children under the rod, full of promises, but empty of performances.

The sinner's determinations are like ice, which thaws in the sun, but freezes again in the shade. What, shall we vow against our sins, and then sin against our vows? This were to take the wages from one master, and do the work for another; to make our promises to God, and our performances to the devil.

Sacred vows bind us to obedience, and sinful vows to repentance. Reader, say not that you have noble blood running in your veins, except you can prove it by heroic actions.

4. Would you *resolve* more than others? *then you should love more than others.*

There is no sin so sweet, but the love of Christ will restrain you from it; nor service so great, but his love can constrain you to it. Should this affection once take fire, then the room will be too hot for sin to reign there.

The Christian's heart is not a harbour for lust, but a chamber for Christ. Love never shakes the boughs, but for Christ to eat the fruits. Many pay the performance of duty as oppressed subjects do their taxes, with heavy complaints: but the spouse of Jesus looks upon herself as not worthy of his remembrance, and upon her service, as unworthy of his acceptance. Had she any thing a thousand times better than herself, she would willingly dispose of it for him.

When Achilles was asked, what enterprizes he found the most easy; he answered, 'Those which I undertake for my friends.' Jacob's seven years' service seemed as nothing, because it was for a woman he loved so much. St. Austin says, 'All things are easy to love.'

If ye love me, keep my commandments. The mortal streams of divine actions flow only from the pure springs of divine affections. Though there be many things for which we should not love man, yet there is not any thing for which we should not love God.

In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that worketh by love. As the heat of the day keeps pace with the shining of the sun, so does faith with love. Faith, like Mary, sits at the feet of Christ, to hear his sermons; while love, like Martha, encompasses him with service. Faith is the great receiver, and

love the great disburser. We take all in by believing, and lay all out by loving. Faith first works love, and then works by love.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyself. Christ brings *ten* commandments into *two*, and Paul reduces them into *one word; For all the law is fulfilled in one word; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*— Love is called an old and a new commandment: it is as old as the law of Moses, and as new as the gospel of Christ.

Faith first seals the conveyance, and love then claims the inheritance. As hatred increases, love decreases. It were well if the child of dissension were never born, or that it died as soon as born.— When the ship of *Christian society* springs a leak, love will use her best endeavours to stop it immediately. The nearer the union, the more dangerous the breach of it. Bodies glued together, might, if severed, be as strongly and beautifully joined as before: but wounded members cannot be healed without leaving a scar.

The love of an *hypocrite*, like the Israelitish bush, is not burning while it is blazing. He not only admits the world into the suburbs of his senses, but into the city of his soul. The love of Jesus, in a believer, resembles *oil* with *water*, which, however shaken together, is always uppermost. When this sun of religious affection arises, it immediately overpowers all other lights.

The expression of Absalom is also the language of God's people: 'Now, therefore, let me see the king's face.' It is heaven on earth, for his children

to see him; and it is heaven in heaven, for his children to dwell with him.

Love puts not off the pursuit of duty, till it attain the possession of glory. There is no rocking this babe to sleep, but in the cradle of the grave. A soul that *loves* much, will *work* much. The injunctions of love are not grievous, but precious.

God is not so much displeased at our *having*, as at our *loving sin*. He is more pleased at our *loving* than at our *performing* his service. None can serve God like a believer, because none can love him as a believer; for the obedience of the heart is the heart of obedience.

5. Would you *love* more than others? *then it is necessary to believe more than others?*

If there be life in the body, the pulse will beat; and if there be faith in the heart, it will work. *What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath no works? Can faith save him?* An *idle* faith is an *evil* faith; for the faith which *works* not, *saves* not.

Perceiving of Christ, bespeaks our *knowledge;* but *receiving* him, bespeaks our *faith. To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Faith not only looks upon Christ as a fountain, but it also lays pipes to convey the water into its own cistern.

The window only radiates the room as a medium by which the rays of light are let in. As faith can do nothing *without* Christ, so it will do nothing *against* Christ. A true affiance resembles the spring in a watch, which moves all the golden wheels, and that only as it is wound up.

The father of the child cried out with tears, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!* Though his tears dropped to the earth, yet his faith reached up to heaven. Divine confidence can swim upon those seas, which feeble reason cannot fathom. Strong diffidence begets weak obedience. The cords of unbelief *once* tied the hands of Christ, but not so strongly but he could have broken them. Now if they bound this *greater* than Sampson, what must they do to feeble Israelites?

It is as natural for a *believing* man to be a *working* man, as it is for the sun to shine, or the fire to burn. Other graces, like the common people of Israel, stand in the outward court; but faith, like the *high-priest*, enters within the vail. If Satan can undermine the foundation, the superstructure will soon totter and fall.

The great Bernard said, *Increduli timen diabolum quasi lionem; ai qui in fide fortes, despiciunt cum quasi vermiculum;* that is, 'Infidels fear the devil as a lion, but those who are strong in the faith despise him as a very little worm.' As there is no grace that glorifies God so much as faith, so there is no grace that he glorifies so much as faith.

Martha and Mary both said, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died.* What then, could he not have saved him while *absent*, as well as *present?* could he not as easily have *sent* him health, as *brought* it? But does their unbelief stop here? No: *Lord, by this time he stinketh.* True, but their unbelief stank more in Christ's nostrils, than Lazarus's body did in theirs.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not

his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old;—but he was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Skilful swimmers are not afraid to venture beyond their depth; while learners paddle on the bank-side.

As faith receives the righteousness of Christ for justification, so it receives the holiness of Christ for sanctification. It is the *hand,* the *mouth,* and the *eye,* of the child of God. It is the *ring* by which the soul is united to God the *chief good.*

He that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters. When saints would advance to an high degree in other virtues, then they generally pray for an increase of this. *Lord, increase our faith,* is no uncommon prayer. What the root sucks from the earth, it soon disperses through the branches.

Lusts may struggle like wounded soldiers on their stumps, and rally like broken troops; but they shall never be masters of that field where faith is fighting. As lusts would not let Christ live *without* us, so Christ will not let them live *within* us. *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.* If faith be a precious pearl, a good conscience is the cabinet that contains it. This heavenly manna must be laid up in a golden pot.

When *fear* is foiled, and taken prisoner, then *faith* comes out of the battle a glorious conqueror. It is as able to keep us from falling into temptations, as from fainting under afflictions.

A man in the exercise of faith, is like Joseph; the archers may hit him, but his bow shall abide

in strength. He is a rich man who lives upon his wealth, and he is a righteous man who lives by faith. Christians are far from wrapping up the talent of faithfulness in the napkin of idleness.

Unbelief not only blinds the eyes to the purity of the law, but deafens the ears to the music of the gospel, and deadens the affections to the glories of heaven. Every appeal to an unbeliever is like a spark of fire falling into the water, which is no sooner in than it is out.

6. Would you *believe* more than others? *then you should know more than others.*

Wisdom makes the face to shine. I may say of Divine Wisdom, as was said of a Grecian lady, That no man ever saw her but what loved her. That Christian is most *excellent,* who is the most *intelligent.*

What the papists cry up as the mother of devotion, that we cry down as the father of superstition.

Satan binds all his captives down in the dark dungeon of ignorance: like falconers, he blindfolds his birds, that he may carry them to hell more securely. The father of light takes no pleasure in the children of darkness. He is not accustomed to carry souls to heaven, as mariners do their passengers to their port, who shut them under the hatches, so that they cannot see whither they go.

It is no wonder that Christ should be so much *undesired,* when he is so much *undiscerned. An understanding without understanding, is but the soul of a beast imprisoned in the body of a man. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

The will of God must be known on earth as it is in heaven, before it can be done on earth as it is in heaven. Utter darkness is the recompense of inward darkness.

None will ever be coloured by walking in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Where there is a veil upon the eye of knowledge, there will be a chain upon the hand of diligence. An ignorant man neither cares what he does, nor knows whither he is going. When such an one is taken off the earth, he cannot be taken into heaven.

Wheresoever there is a trade carried on for heaven, the Spirit of God must first open the shop windows. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.* There is no doing the work of the day, but by the light of the day. Darkness is the devil's element, and the sinner's punishment. *My people perish for lack of knowledge.* When the candle of the soul is extinguished, it must needs sit in darkness.

Taking vengeance on them that know not God. The infidel's want of judgment is a sin against which Christ will come to judgment. Ah, how do blind men take that for *devotion*, which is only *superstition;* and that for a Bethel, which is no better than a Babel! To preserve the understanding as a Goshen from the darkness of Egypt, is the way to avoid the plagues of Egypt.

I send thee to open blind eyes; to turn them from darkness to light. Spiritual *acts* require spiritual *eyes;* and the clearer we see them, the better we perform them. He who desires to see the face of

holiness in its native lustre, must not set his carnal judgment to draw the picture.

7. Would you *know* more than others? *then you must have God reveal himself more to you than he does to others.*

Man does not first come to God that he might be taught; but he is first taught, that he might come to God. *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.* God *gives*, and then we *know*. When he opens our eyes, then we can see;—when he loosens our tongues, we can speak;—when he says, Come forth, we live;—and when he commands us to be of good comfort, we can rejoice.

God is first in all the works of creation and providence. He is all in nature, all in grace, and all in glory. *Without me, ye can do nothing.*

Thus—if you would deny yourselves, pray, resolve, love, believe, or know more than others—it can only be by the gracious revelation of God to your mental powers. All the difference that exists between man and man, is only from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel. You may cast the net on any side of the ship of eminence or religious excellence, but he only can enclose it with blessings.

Thus you may be taught to acknowledge who he is, rest on what he does, and finally be with him where he is; and though your journey be attended with bitterness, yet he shall soon crown you with eternal blessedness.

A SERMON,

ENTITLED

A WEDDING-RING

FOR THE FINGER.

W. Secker.

A SERMON.

GENESIS ii. 18.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man should be alone; I will make him a Help meet for him.

HUMAN misery is to divine mercy, as a black foil to a sparkling diamond, or as a sable cloud to the sun-beams. Psal. 84, *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!* Man is,

In his creation, angelical; in his corruption, diabolical; in his renovation, theological; in his translation, majestical.

1. An Angel in Eden.
2. A Devil in the World.
3. A Saint in the Church.
4. A King in Heaven.

There were four silver channels in which the crystal streams of God's affection ran to man in his creation.

1. In his Preparation.
2. In his Assimilation.
3. In his Coronation.
4. In his Association.

1. In his *Preparation:* Other creatures received the charter of their beings by a simple *fiat;* but there was a *consultation* at his forming, not for the *difficulty,* but for the *dignity* of the work. The painter is more studious about his masterpiece. The four elements were taken out of their elements, to make up the perfection of man's complexion; the fire was purified, the air was clarified, the water was purged, the earth was refined: when man was moulded, heaven and earth were married; a body from the one was espoused to a soul from the other.

2. In his *Assimilation:* Other creatures were made like themselves, but man was made like God, as the wax hath the impression of the seal upon it. It is admirable to behold so fair a picture on such coarse canvas, and so bright a character on such brown paper.

3. In his *Coronation:* He that made man and all the rest, made man over all the rest; *quantillum dominum posuit Deus in tantum dominum.* He was a little lord of great lordship; this king was crowned in his *cradle.*

4. In his *Association:* Society is the solace of humanity: the world would be a desert without a consort.

Most of men's parts are made of pairs; now he that was double in his perfection, must not be single in his condition: *And the Lord God said, &c.*

These words are like the iron-gate that opened to Peter of its own accord, dividing themselves into three parts.

1. An instruction, *And the Lord God said.*

2. An assertion, *'Tis not good that man should be alone.*

3. A determination, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In the first, there is a majesty proposed.

In the second, there is a malady presented.

In the third, there is a remedy provided.

Once more let me put these grapes into the press.

1. The sovereignness of the expression, *And the Lord God said.*

2. The solitariness of the condition, *It is not good, &c.*

3. The suitableness of the provision, *I will make, &c.*

In the first, there is the worth of *Veracity.*

In the second, there is the want of *Society.*

In the third, there is the work of *Divinity.*

Of these in their order. And first of the first.

First, The sovereignness of the expression, *And the Lord God said.*

Luke i. 70, *As he spake by the mouth of his prophets.* In other scriptures he used their mouths, but in this he made use of his own: they were the organs, and he the breath; they were the streams, and he the fountain. How he spake, it is hard to be spoken, whether eternally, or internally, or externally, *Quomodo non est quod quæremus, sed potius quid dixerit intelligamus:* we are not to inquire into the manner of speaking, but into the matter that is spoken; which leads me like a directing-star from the suburbs to the city, from the porch to the palace, from the founder of the mine to the treasure that is in it, *It is not good, &c.*

In which you have two things:

1. The Subject.
2. The Predicate.

The subject, *Man alone.*

The predicate, *It is not good, &c.*

1. The subject, *Man alone;* take this in two branches.

1. As it is limited to one man.
2. As it is lengthened to all men.

First, As it is limited to one man, and so it is taken particularly; man for the first man. When all other creatures had their mates, Adam wanted his: though he was the emperor of the earth, and the admiral of the seas, yet in Paradise without a companion; though he was truly happy, yet he was not fully happy; though he had enough for his board, yet he had not enough for his bed; though he had many creatures to serve him, yet he wanted a creature to solace him; when he was compounded in creation, he must be completed by conjunction; when he had no sin to hurt him, then he must have a wife to help him: *It is not good that man should be alone.*

Secondly, As it is lengthened to all men, and so it is taken universally. Heb. xiii. 4, *Marriage is honourable unto all.* It is not only *warrantable,* but *honourable.* The whole Trinity hath conspired together to set a crown of glory upon the head of *Matrimony.*

1. *God the Father:* Marriage was a tree planted within the walls of Paradise; this flower first grew in God's garden.

2. *The Son:* Marriage is a crystal-glass, wherein Christ and the saints do see each others' faces.

3. *The Holy Ghost:* by his over-shadowing of the blessed Virgin. Well might the world, when it saw her pregnancy, suspect her virginity; but her matrimonial condition was a grave to that suspicion: without this, her innocency had not prevented her infamy; she needed a shield to defend that chastity abroad, which was kept inviolable at home.

Too many that have not worth enough to preserve that virginity, have yet will enough to cover their unchastity; turning the medicine of frailty into the mantle of filthiness. Certainly she is mad that cuts off her leg to get her a crutch, or that venoms her face to wear a mask.

St. Paul makes it one of the characters of those that should cashier the faith, 1 Tim. iv. 3. Not to *forbear* marriage, which may be *lawful;* but to *forbid* it, which is *sinful.*

One of the Popes of Rome sprinkles this unholy drop upon it, *Carnis pollutionem & immunditiem.*

It is strange that should be a *pollution,* which was instituted *before corruption;* or that *impurity,* which was ordained in the *state of innocency:* or that they should make that to be a SIN, which they make to be a SACRAMENT.

But a bastard may be laid at the door of chastity, and a leaden crown set upon a golden head.

Bellarmine, that mighty Atlas of the Papal power, blows his stinking breath upon it, saying, *Better were it for a priest to defile himself with many harlots, than to be married to one wife.* These children of the purple-whore prefer their *monasteries* before our *marriages;* a *concubine* before a *companion.* They *use* too many for their

lusts to *chuse* any for their *love*. Their tables are so largely spread, that they cannot feed upon one dish.

As for their exalting of a virgin-state, it is like him that commended fasting when he had filled his belly.

Who knows not that virginity is a pearl of sparkling lustre? But cannot the one be set up without the other be thrown down? will no oblation pacify the former, but the demolishing of the latter? Though we find many enemies to the *choice* of marriage, yet it is rare to find any enemies to the use of marriage. They would pick the lock that want the key, and pluck the fruit that do not plant the tree.

The Hebrews have a saying, *He is not a man that hath not a woman.*

Though they climb too high a bough, yet it is to be feared that such flesh is full of imperfection, that is not tending to propagation: though man alone may be good, yet *it is not good that man should be alone:* which leads me from the subject to the predicate, *It is not good, &c.*

Non bonum is not in this place as *malum;* but *bonum est, honestum, utile, jucundum.*

Now it is not good that man should be in a single condition, upon a threefold consideration.

1. In respect of sin, which would not else be prevented. Marriage is like water, to quench the sparks of lust's fire. 1 Cor. vii. 2, *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every one have his own wife, &c.* Man needed no such physic when he was in perfect health. Temptations may break nature's

best fence, and lay its paradise waste; but a single life is a prison of unruly desires, which is daily attempted to be broken open.

Some indeed force themselves to a single life, merely to avoid the charges of a married state; they had rather fry in the grease of their own sensuality, than extinguish those flames with an allowed remedy: *It is better to marry, than to burn;* to be *lawfully coupled,* than to be *lustfully scorched.* It is better feeding these flames with ordinary fuel.

2. It is not good in respect of mankind, which then would not be propagated. The Roman historian relating the ravishing of the Sabine women, excused it thus, *Res erat unius ætatis populus virorum:* without them mankind would fall from the earth and perish. Marriages do turn mutability into the image of eternity: it springs up new buds, when the old are withered. It is a greater honour for a man to be the father of one son, than to be the master of many servants. Without a wife, children cannot be had lawfully; without a good wife, children cannot be had comfortably. Man and woman, as the stock and the scion, being grafted by marriage, are trees bearing fruit to the world.

St. Augustine says, this pair is, *primum par & fundamentum omnium, &c.*

They are the first link of human society, to which all the rest are joined. Mankind had long ago decayed and been like a taper fallen into the socket, if those breaches which are made by MORTALITY, were not repaired by MATRIMONY.

3. It is not good in regard of the church, which could not then have been expiated. Where there is no generation, there can be no regeneration.

Nature makes us creatures, before grace makes us Christians.

If the loins of men had been less fruitful, the death of Christ would have been less successful.

It was a witty question that one put to him that said, Marriage fills the earth, but virginity fills the heavens: how can the heavens be full, if the earth be empty?

Had Adam lived in innocency without matrimony, there would have been no servants of God in the church militant, nor no saints with God in the church triumphant. But I will not sink this vessel by the over-burthening of it, nor press this truth to death, by laying too great a load upon its shoulders.

There is one knot which I must untie before I make a further progress: 1 Cor. 1, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

Do all the scriptures proceed out of the same mouth, and do they not all speak the same truth? The God of unity will not indite discord; and the God of verity cannot assert falsehood. If good and evil be contraries, how contrary then are these scriptures! Either Moses mistakes God, or Paul mistakes Moses about the point of marriage. To which I shall give a double answer.

1. There is a public and a private good. In respect of one man, it may be good not to touch a woman; but in respect of all, *so it is not good that man should be alone.*

Moses speaks of the state of man created, Paul of the state of man corrupted: now that which by *institution* was a *mercy*, may by corruption become a *misery;* as pure water is tainted by running through a miry channel, or as the sun's beams receive a tincture by shining through a coloured glass. *There is no print of evil in the world, but sin was the stamp that made it.* They that seek nothing but *weal* in its *commission*, will find nothing but *woe* in the *conclusion*. Which leads me from the solitariness of the condition, *Man alone*, to the suitableness of the provision, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In which you have two parts:

1. The agent, *I will make.*
2. The object, *A help.*

First, The agent, *I will make.*

We cannot build a house without tools. But the Trinity is at liberty; *Dic verbum tantum.*

To God's omniscience there is nothing invisible, and to God's omnipotence there is nothing impossible.

We work by hands without, but he works without hands. He that made man meet for help, makes a meet help for man.

Marriages are consented above, but consummated below. Prov. xvii. 22., Though man wants supply, yet man cannot supply his wants. James i. 17., *Every good and perfect gift comes from above, &c.* A wife, though she be not a *perfect gift*, yet she is a *good gift.* These beams are darted from the Sun of Righteousness.

Hast thou a soft heart? It is of God's break-

ing: Hast thou a sweet wife? She is of God's making.

Let me draw up this expression with a double application.

When thou layest out for such a good on earth, look up to the God of heaven. Let him make thy choice for thee, who hath made his choice of thee. Look *above* you, before you look *about* you. Nothing makes up the happiness of a married condition, like the holiness of a mortified disposition. Account not those the most worthy that are the most wealthy. Art thou matched *to* the Lord? match *in* the Lord. How happy are such marriages, where Christ is at the wedding! Let none but those who have found favour in God's eyes, find favour in yours.

2. Give God the tribute of your gratulation for your good companion. Take heed of paying your rent to a wrong landlord. When you taste of the stream, reflect on the spring that feeds it. Now thou hast four eyes for thy speculation, four hands for thy operation, four feet for thy ambulation, and four shoulders for thy sustenation. What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in point of divinity, that is unthankfulness in point of morality; an offence unpardonable. Pity it is but that moon should ever be in an eclipse, that will not acknowledge her beams to be borrowed from the sun. He that praises not the giver, prizes not the gift; and so I pass from the agent to the object, *A Help.*

She must be so much, and no less; and so much, and no more. Our *ribs* were not ordained to be our *rulers.* They are not made of the head,

to claim superiority; but out of the *side*, to be content with *equality*. They desert the *Author* of nature, that invert the *order* of nature. The woman was made for the *man's comfort*, but the man was not made for the *woman's command*. Those shoulders aspire too high, that content not themselves with a room below their head. It is between a man and his wife in the house, as it is between the sun and the moon in the heavens: when the greater light goes down, the lesser light gets up; when the one ends in setting, the other begins in shining. The wife may be a sovereign in her husband's absence, but she must be subject in her husband's presence. As Pharaoh said to Joseph, so should the husband say to his wife: Gen. xli. 40, *Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou.* The body of that household can never make any good motion, whose bones are out of place. The woman must be a help to the man in these four things:

1. To his *Piety*.
2. To his *Society*.
3. To his *Progeny*.
4. To his *Prosperity*.

To his piety, by the ferventness of her excitation. To his society, by the fragrantness of her conversation. To his progeny, by the fruitfulness of her education. To his prosperity, by the faithfulness of her preservation.

1. To his *piety*, by the ferventness of her excitation, 1 Peter, ii. 7.

Husband and wife should be as the milch-kine, which were coupled together to carry the ark of God; or as the two Cherubims, that looked one upon another, and both upon the mercy-seat; or as the two tables of stone, on each of which were engraven the laws of God. In some families married persons are like Jeremiah's two baskets of figs, the one very good, the other very evil; or like fire and water, whilst the one is flaming in devotion, the other is freezing in corruption. There is a two-fold hindrance in holiness: First, on the right side: Secondly, on the left. On the right side: when the wife would run in God's way, the husband will not let her go: when the fore-horse in a team will not draw, he wrongs all the rest: when the general of an army forbids a march, all the soldiers stand still. Sometimes on the left: how did Solomon's idolatrous wives draw away his heart from Heaven! A sinning wife was Satan's first ladder, by which he scaled the walls of Paradise, and took away the fort-royal of Adam's heart from him. Thus she that should have been the *help* of his *flesh*, was the *hurt* of his *faith*: his *nature's under-propper*, becomes his *grace's under-miner*; and she that should be a *crown* on the *head*, is a *cross* on the *shoulders*. The wife is often to the husband, as the ivy is to the oak, which draws away his sap from him.

2. A help to his *society*, by the fragrantness of her conversation.

Man is an affectionate creature. Now the woman's behaviour should be such towards the man, as to require his affection, by increasing his de-

lectation; that the new-born love may not be blasted as soon as it is blossomed; that it may not be ruined, before it be rooted. A spouse should carry herself so to her husband, as not to disturb his love by her contention, nor to destroy his love by her alienation. Husband and wife should be like two candles burning together, which make the house more lightsome; or like two fragrant flowers bound up in one nosegay, that augments its sweetness; or like two well-tuned instruments, which sounding together, make the more melodious music. Husband and wife, what are they but as two springs meeting, and so joining their streams that they may make but one current? It is an unpleasing spectacle to view any contention in this conjunction.

3. To his *progeny*, by the fruitfulness of her education; that so her children in the flesh may be God's children in the spirit, 1 Sam. i. 11. Hannah vows, if the Lord will give her a son, by bearing him, she will return that son to the Lord by serving him. A spouse should be more careful of her children's breeding, than she should be fearful of her children's bearing. Take heed lest these flowers grow in the devil's garden. Though you bring them out in corruption, yet do not bring them up to damnation. Those are not mothers, but monsters; that whilst they should be teaching their children the way to heaven with their lips, are leading them the way to hell with their lives. *Good education is the best livery you can give them living; and it is the best legacy you can leave them dying.* You let out your *cares* to make them *great:* O lift up your *prayers* to make

them *good;* that before you die *from* them, you may see Christ live *in* them. Whilst these twigs are green and tender, they should be bowed towards God. Children and servants are in a family, as passengers are in a boat; husband and wife, they are as a pair of oars to row them to their desired haven. Let these small pieces of timber be hewed and squared for the celestial building: by putting a *sceptre* of *grace* into their *hands,* you will set a *crown* of *glory* upon their *heads.*

4. A help to his *prosperity* by her faithful preservation, being not a wanderer abroad, but a worker at home.

One of the ancients speaks excellently: she must not be a field-wife, like Dinah; nor a street-wife, like Thamar; nor a window-wife, like Jezabel.

Phidias, when he drew a woman, painted her sitting under a snail-shell, that she might imitate that little creature, that goes no farther than it can carry its house upon its head.

How many women are there, that are not labouring bees, but idle drones; that take up a room in the hive, but bring no honey to it; that are moths to their husband's estates, spending when they should be *sparing!* As the man's part is to *provide industriously,* so the woman's is to *preserve discreetly;* the one must not be *carelessly wanting,* the other must not be *causelessly wasting;* the man must be *seeking* with *diligence,* the woman must be *saving* with *providence.* The cock and hen both scrape together in the dust-heap, to pick up something for their little chickens.

To wind up this on a short bottom.

1. If the woman be a help to the man, then let not the man cast dirt on the woman.

Secundus, being asked his opinion of a woman, speaks thus, *Viri naufragium, domûs tempestas, quietis impedimentum, &c.* But surely he was a monster, and not a man; fitter for a tomb to bury him, than a womb to bear him.

Some have stiled them to be like clouds in the sky: like motes in the sun: like snuffs in the candle: like weeds in the garden.

It is not good to play the butcher with that naked sex, that hath no *arms* but for *embraces.* A preacher should not be silent for those, who are silenced from preaching; because they are the weaker vessels, shall they be broken all to pieces? Thou that sayest Women are evil, it may be thy expression flows from thy experience; but I shall never take that mariner for my pilot, that hath no better knowledge than the splitting of his own ship. Wilt thou condemn the frame of all, for the fault of one? As if it were true *logic;* because *some* are *evil,* therefore *none* are *good.* He hath ill eyes that disdains all objects. To blast thy helper, is to blame thy Maker. In a word, we took our *rise* from their *bowels,* and may take our *rest* in their *bosoms.*

2. Is the woman to be a help to the man? Then let the man be a help to the woman. What makes these debtors be such ill pay-masters, but because they look at what is owing them, but not at what is owing by them? If thou wouldst have thy wife's reverence, let her have thy respect.

To force a *fear* from this relation, is that which neither befits the *husband's authority* to *enjoin*, nor the *wife's duty* to *perform*. A wife must not be *sharply driven*, but *sweetly drawn*. *Compassion* may *bend* her, but *compulsion* will *break* her. Husband and wife should act towards each other with *consent*, not by *constraint*.

There are four things wherein the husband is a meet help to the wife.

First, In his protecting of her from injuries. It is well observed by one, that the rib of which woman was made, was taken from under the man's arm: as the use of the arm is to keep off blows from the body, so the office of the husband is to ward off blows from the wife. The wife is the husband's treasury, and the husband should be the wife's armoury. In darkness, he should be her sun for direction; in danger, he should be her shield for protection.

2. In his providing for her necessities. The husband must communicate maintenance to the wife, as the head conveys influence to the members; thou must not be a drone, and she a drudge. A man in a married estate is like a chamberlain in an inn; there is knocking for him in every room. Many persons in this condition waste that estate in luxury, which should supply their wives' necessity. *Nec amor viget mariti, nec fides Christiani;* they have neither the faith of a *Christian*, nor the love of a husband. It is a sad spectacle to see a virgin sold with her own money unto slavery, when services are better than marriages; the one receives wages, whilst the other buy their fetters.

3. In his covering her infirmities. Who would trample upon a jewel, because it is fallen in the dirt? or throw away a heap of wheat for a little chaff? or despise a golden wedge, because it retains some dross? These roses have some prickles. Now husbands should spread a mantle of charity over their wives' infirmities. It is a great deal better you should fast, than feast yourselves upon their failings. Some husbands are never well, longer than they are holding their fingers in their wives' sores. Such are like crows, that fasten only upon carrion. Do not put out the candle, because of the snuff. If the gold be good, allow it grains. Husbands and wives should provoke one another to love; and they should love one another notwithstanding of provocation. Take heed of poisoning those springs from whence the streams of your pleasure flow.

4. By his delighting in her society. A wife takes sanctuary, not only in her husband's *house*, but in his *heart*. The tree of love should grow up in the family, as the tree of life grew up in the garden. They that chuse their love, should love their choice. *They that marry where they affect not, will affect where they marry not.* Two joined together without love, are but two tied together to make one another miserable. And so I pass to the last stage of the text, *A help meet.*

A *help*, there is her fulness; a *meet help*, there is her fitness.

The angels were too much above him; the creatures were too much below him; he could not step up to the former, nor could he stoop

down to the latter: the one was out of his reach, the other was out of his race; but the woman is a parallel-line drawn equal with him: meet she must be in three things.

1. In the harmony of her disposition. Husband and wife should be like the image in a looking-glass, that answers in all properties to the face that stands before it; or like an *echo*, that returneth the voice it receiveth. Many marriages are like putting new wine into old bottles. An old man is not a meet help for a young woman. He that sets a grey head upon green shoulders, hath one foot in the grave, and another in the cradle. Yet how many times do you see the spring of youth wedded to the winter of old age! A young person is not a meet help for an old woman; raw flesh is but an ill plaster for rotten bones. *He that in his non-age marries another in her dotage, his lust hath one wife in possession, but his love another in reversion.*

2. In the heraldry of her condition. Some of our European notions are so strict in their junctions, that it is against their laws for the commonalty to couple with the gentry.

It was well said by one: if the wife be too much *above* her husband, she either *ruins* him by *vast expenses*, or *reviles* him with her *base reproaches*. If she be too much *below* her husband, either her *former condition* makes her *too generous*, or her *present mutation* makes her *too imperious*.

Marriages are stiled *matches;* yet amongst those many that are married, how few are there that are matched! Husbands and wives are like locks and

keys, that rather break than open, except the wards be answerable.

3. In the holiness of her religion. If adultery may separate a marriage contracted, idolatry may hinder a marriage not perfected. Cattle of divers kinds were not to ingender: 2 Corinth. vi. 14, *Be not unequally yoked, &c.* It is dangerous taking her for a wife, who will not take God for a husband. It is not meet that one flesh should be of two spirits. Is there never a tree thou likest in the garden, but that which bears forbidden fruit? There are but two channels, in which the remaining streams shall run.

1. To those men that want wives, how to chuse them.

2. To those women that have husbands, how to use them.

I. To those men that want wives, how to chuse them.

Marriage is the tying of such a knot, that nothing but death can unloose. Common reason suggests so much, that we should be long a doing that which can but once be done. Where *one* design hath been *gravelled* in the *sands* of *delay*, *thousands* have been split upon the *rock* of *precipitance*. Rash adventures yield little gain. Opportunities are not like tides, that when one is past, another returns; but yet take heed of flying without your wings: you may breed such agues in your bones, that may shake you to your grave.

1. Let me preserve you from a bad choice.

2. Present you with a good one.

1. To preserve you from a bad choice.

Take that in three things.

1. Chuse not for beauty.
2. Chuse not for dowry.
3. Chuse not for dignity.

He that *looks for beauty*, buys a *picture*.

He that *loves for dowry*, makes a *purchase*.

He that leaps for *dignity*, matches with a *multitude* at once.

The first of these is too blind to be directed.

The second, too base to be accepted.

The third, too bold to be respected.

1. Chuse not by your eyes.
2. Chuse not by your hands.
3. Chuse not by your ears.

First, Chuse not by your eyes, looking at the beauty of the person. Not but this is lovely in a woman; but that this is not all for which a woman should be beloved. He that had the choice of many faces stamps the character upon them all: *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.* The sun is more bright in a clear sky, than when the horizon is clouded. But if a woman's flesh hath more of beauty, than her spirit hath of *Christianity*; it is like poison in sweetmeats, most dangerous: Gen. vi. 2, *The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair*, &c. One would have thought, that they should rather have looked for *grace* in the *heart*, than for *beauty* in the *face*. Take heed of inning at the fairest signs: the swan hath black flesh under her white feathers.

Secondly, Chuse not by your hands for the bounty of the portion.

When Cato's daughter was asked, why she did

not marry? she thus replied, she could not find the man that loved her person above her portion. Men love curious pictures, but they would have them set in golden frames. Some are so degenerate, as to think any good enough, who have but goods enough. Take heed, for sometimes the bag and baggage go together. The person should be a figure, and the portion a cypher, which added to her, advances the sum; but alone signifies nothing. When Themistocles was to marry his daughter, two suitors courted her together; the one rich, and a fool: the other wise, but poor; and being demanded which of the two he had rather his daughter should have? He answered, *Mallem virum sine pecuniâ, &c.* I had rather she should have a man without money, than money without a man.

Thirdly, Chuse not by your ears, for the dignity of her parentage. A good old stock may nourish a fruitless branch. There are many children who are not the blessings, but the blemishes of their parents. They are nobly descended, but ignobly minded. Such was Aurelius Antonius, of whom it was said, that he injured his country in nothing, but being the father of such a child. There are many *low* in their *descents,* that are *high* in their *deserts.* Such as the cobler's son, who grew to be a famous captain: when a great person upbraided the meanness of his original, *My* nobility (said he) *begins* with *me,* but *thy* nobility *ends* with *thee.* Piety is a greater honour than parentage. *She is the best gentlewoman that is heir of her own deserts, and not the degenerated off-spring of another's virtue.*

To present you with a good choice in three things:

1. Chuse such a one as will be subject to your dominion. Take heed of yoking yourselves with untamed heifers.

2. Chuse such a one as may sympathize with you in your affliction. Marriage is just like a sea voyage; he that enters into this ship must look to meet with storms and tempests: 1 Corinth. vii. 28, *They that marry shall have trouble in the flesh.* Flesh and trouble married together, whether we marry or no. Now a bitter cup is too much to be drank by one mouth. A heavy burthen is easily carried by the assistance of other shoulders. Husband and wife should neither be proud flesh, nor dead flesh. You are fellow-members, therefore should have a fellow-feeling. While one stands safe on the shore, the other should pity him that is tost on the sea. Sympathy in suffering, is like a dry house in a wet day.

3. Chuse such a one as may be serviceable to your salvation. A man may think he hath a saint when he hath a devil: but take heed of a harlot that is false to thy bed; and of a hypocrite, that is false to thy GOD.

II. To those women that have husbands, how to use them. In two things:

1. Carry yourselves towards them with obedience. Let their power command you, that their praise may commend you. Though you may have your husbands' hearts, yet you must not have their heads; as you will his love, so you should love his will. Till the husband leaves commanding, the wife must never leave obeying. As his

injunctions must be lawful, so her subjection must be loyal.

2. With faithfulness. In creation, God made not one woman for many men, nor many women for one man; every wife should be to her husband, as Eve was to Adam, a whole world of women; and every husband should be to his wife, as Adam was to Eve, a whole world of men. When a river is divided into many channels, the main current starves.

To conclude: Good servants are a great blessing; good children a greater blessing; but a good wife is the greatest blessing: and such a Help let him seek for her that wants one; let him sigh for her that has lost one; let him take pleasure in her that enjoys one. AND THE LORD GOD SAID, IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE: I WILL MAKE HIM A HELP MEET FOR HIM.

THE END.

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